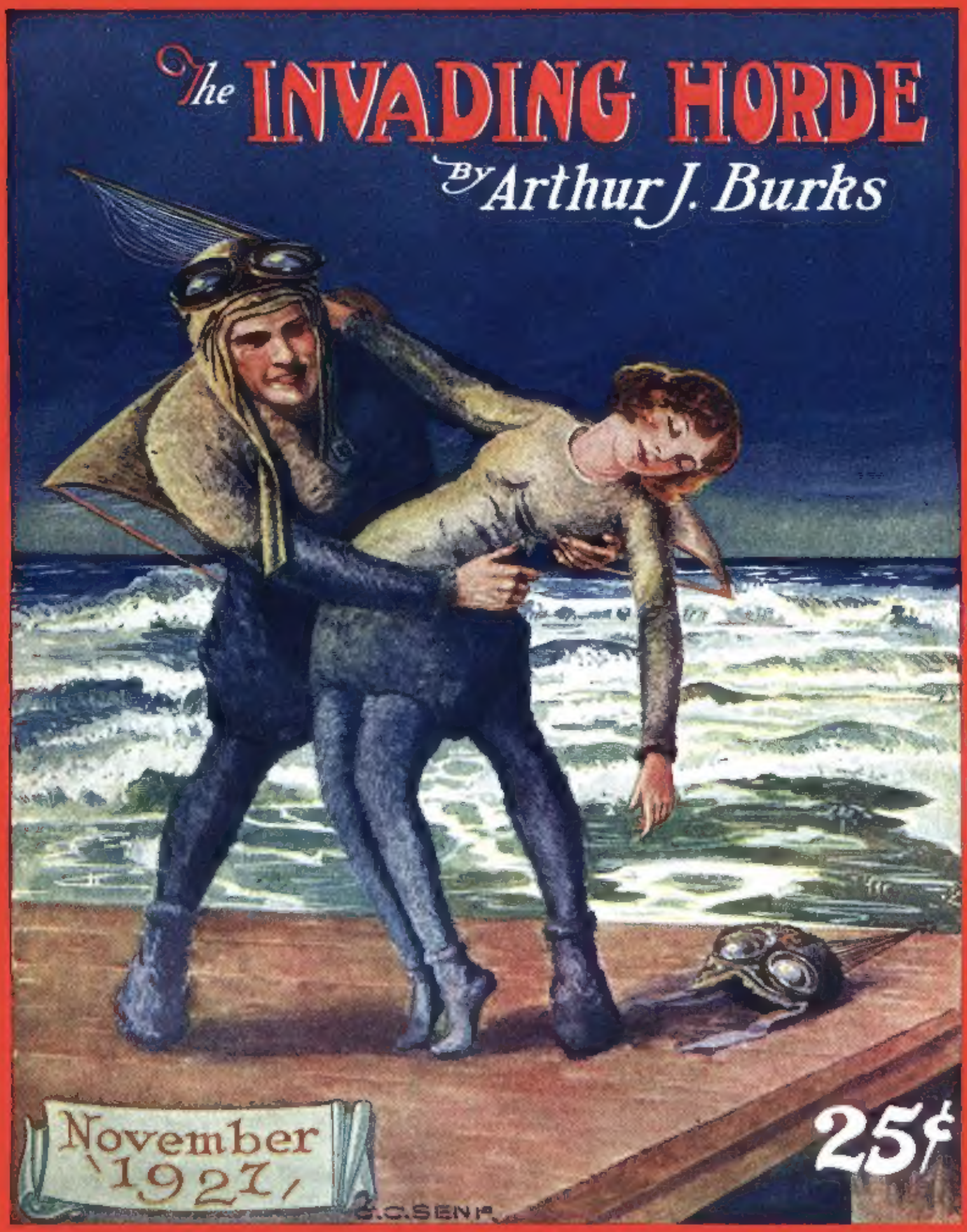
NOVEMBER, 1927

Weird Tales

The Unique Magazine



Edmond Hamilton — Will Smith — Henry S. Whitehead
G. G. Pendarves — Clare Winger Harris — and Others

WEIRD TALES

Printed in U.S.A.

Vol. X, No. 5—25c

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How in a Few Hours I Learned The Secret of Sketching

EVEN as a boy, I was fond of drawing. Hundreds of other people feel the same way, I suppose, but I always had an ambition to sometime become a commercial artist.

I don't think it was altogether the big incomes that modern commercial artists receive which attracted me to this profession as much as the fascination and interest of the work itself, and the independence of an artist's life.

Although I had a fondness for drawing, I found it very difficult to sketch anything accurately. For example, I could never get a drawing to look anything like the person it was supposed to represent. I knew just how I wanted the picture to look, but somehow, I never could make my sketches lifelike enough to suit me.

How it All Began

Then one evening, just as I was getting on the car on my way home from the office someone gave me a slap on the back and, turning quickly, I found myself looking into the smiling face of Jack Keating.

We found a seat at the end of the car and began telling what we had been doing in the three years since we had last seen each other.

Suddenly Jack stopped talking.

How can I describe my surprise when he quickly slipped a little book from his pocket and began to sketch an old man with spectacles who was reading a paper at the far end of the car. As I watched, Jack's hand flew rapidly and without a pause over the little sheet before him.

Jack sketching! I couldn't help smiling, for when Jack and I were at school he could hardly draw a straight line.

But my smile faded. I was amazed. For out of his pencil strokes came a vivid little picture with scarcely any detail, yet intensely alive and full of character. I looked up to find Jack smiling at my amazement.

"For the Love of Mike, Jack," I exclaimed, "Since when did you become an artist?"

Jack gave a few more touches to his little sketch, and then turned over the pages. His little book was almost full of clever drawings similar in style to the one he had just completed. They were all sketches of people, alive with character and movement.

"I don't think I ever drew anything in my life until a couple of years ago," he said, "but it is really astonishing how quickly the hand and eye can be developed. There are only a few basic rules which a fellow can get in a few hours of real work—then it is all a matter of practice."

"But how," I asked, "did you happen to find all this out—and who taught you?"

"It all began with an advertisement I saw in a magazine, offering a book about DRAWING. I read every word of that advertisement twice over. Then I sent for the book."

I really couldn't help interrupting Jack here.

"Why, I did just the same thing yesterday," I said. "But, go on, Jack."

"Well," said Jack, "A day or so later I got the book. It convinced me pretty firmly that I could draw if I really determined to do it. I came to the conclusion that the men behind the North American School of Drawing, who issued the book, meant just what they said. So I took up their offer to teach me—or refund the money I paid.

"I had always wanted to draw," continued Jack, "so I stuck to the lessons they sent me."

"And—," I prompted.

"Come down to my studio tomorrow," he grinned as he left the car, "and I will show you the results."

When Jack had left me, I felt convinced that I, too, could do the same. So when the book from the School arrived the following morning, I read it right through with more than casual interest.

I thought of Jack's wonderful success and decided to enroll for a Course there and then.

I was soon studying the lessons in my spare time at home. I found myself carried away by the ease with which I acquired a mastery over my brush and pencil.

My First Attempt

One day I thought of a good idea for a poster. I sat down, sketched it out and worked it up into a finished drawing. When I commenced the sketch I had no idea of attempting to sell it, but when it was finished I liked it so well that I sent it to the Art Director of an Advertising Agency. Imagine my surprise when, a few days later, a check arrived, together with a letter asking me to call at their offices to make arrangements to do some newspaper drawings.

Then I began sending odd sketches to illustrated papers and other advertising concerns. Of course, they were not all accepted by any means, but a number were, and I soon found myself averaging a substantial weekly income.

When I told Jack Keating what I had done, he was delighted and surprised. "It only proves," he said, "that anyone who likes sketching can be taught to produce the kind of drawings that editors and advertisers want. The work is not as hard as it looks when you have been shown how."

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Weird Tales

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A MAGAZINE of the BIZARRE and UNUSUAL

VOLUME X NUMBER 5

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CERTAIN basic ghost-story themes have been used again and again, until they have lost their savor. The ghosts of fiction derive their interest and fascination from their strangeness; and if ghosts do the same things, in slightly different fashion, through story after story, then they become as humdrum and uninteresting as the sight of a milk wagon to a night-owl. The ghost-stories in WEIRD TALES are different. In this issue, the ghostly abbey that limns itself against the sky in *The Lord of the Tarn* when Torkel Yarl's hour arrives, and the ghost of Old Morris revealing itself more and more each day in *The Shadows* until that terrific assault by the Jumbee—these are ghost-stories that are really out of the ordinary.

One ghostly yarn that has come to us in the mails at least a score of times is the incident of the wager: Someone bets someone else that he (or she) does not dare to spend the night in a certain haunted room (or sometimes at a haunted grave in the cemetery); and to prove that the haunted place has actually been visited, the person is to drive a stake into the grave (or nails into a certain place in the floor of the haunted room). But in the excitement and terror of the occasion, the person drives the stake (or the nails) through his coat, and when he tries to get away he finds that he is held by the fastened coat, which his excited imagination transforms into a ghost, and he dies of terror. Several times, in rejecting stories based on this incident, we have inquired of the authors how they happened to think up such a plot, and in each case the story had been told to the writer as an incident that had actually happened, so the writer worked it up into a story. But the theme was already used once in WEIRD TALES *(The Ghost of Liscard Manor,* November issue, 1924), and once is enough. Houdini, in WEIRD TALES for May, 1924, related the same incident as having been told him by his father: "My father, who has also investigated phenomena, and who was one of the pioneers in 1848, relates a story that in his student days one of the boys in his class had to drive a nail in a wooden cross at midnight in the local cemetery, and as he turned to flee, a hand reached out and held him fast. He shrieked and shouted for help, screaming out that he was held by a ghostly hand, but by the time assistance arrived, he was dead on the grave. It appears that in driving the nail in, he had accidentally, in his excitement, nailed down the coat. His mind had conjectured a hand reaching out from the grave and securing him."

Another ghost-story plot that appears with great regularity in our mail is

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Railroad Industry

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World Transportation

Civil Engineering

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Send a postcard or a letter or mail the coupon for the Free Book "Successful Draftsmanship," which Dobe has written for the benefit of all men who are interested in drafting. It's a great book about a great profession—and you ought to read it. These four men are certainly glad they read it and took Dobe's word that he could make real draftsmen out of them. No matter who you are, where you are, or what your job is you should send for this book NOW. You should send for it unless you are making all the money you want already.

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this: A man goes to sleep in a room that is supposed to be haunted. Awaking in the middle of the night he imagines he sees a ghostly hand at the foot of the bed. Opening fire at the hand, he feels a stinging pain, and realizes that the supposed hand is his own foot, and that he has blown off two of his toes. This theme has appeared at least fifty times in manuscripts submitted to WEIRD TALES. That is why the story is always returned to its author.

"Why not publish more Chinese stories?" queries Donald Culhane, of Butte, Montana, in a letter to The Eyrie, and adds: "I can hardly stand the suspense of waiting for the October issue so that I can finish *The Bride of Osiris*. It is thrilling."

"Every issue of WEIRD TALES continues to amaze me," writes Charles Fingerman, of Camden, New Jersey. "The stories, always fine, improve each month to such an extent that readers are lost in conjecture, wondering how standards, like records, can be broken so often, for WEIRD TALES is always so full of good stories, splendidly told, that no special standard can stand up for any length of time, as new ones in point of themes, styles, and denouements are being created as fast as the old standards are toppled over."

Lutie Keith, of Philadelphia, expresses her reactions to this magazine in verse. We have not room to print the entire poem, but give the first strophe:

"I lie awake far into the wee small hours and read WEIRD TALES,
While out in the shrouding gloom of the night, I hear weird wails;
I know it is only the wind, that moans in the tree-tops tall,
But to me it sounds like a disembodied soul's despairing call."

"WEIRD TALES, today, is in a class by itself," writes Charles M. Stephens, of Brooklyn, New York. "It is as fine a magazine as any the world over. But everybody's saying that. And no wonder, with all its wealth of good reading. Eli Colter's *The Dark Chrysalis* is a masterpiece. I've just finished it, and, man, it's a story that blazes new trails in fiction. He deserves all sorts of congratulations. For many hours of fine entertainment I am indebted also to H. P. Lovecraft, Seabury Quinn, H. Warner Munn, Frank Belknap Long, Jr., Nictzin Dyalhis, Greye La Spina, Victor Rousseau, and others, who have written such exceptional fiction for WEIRD TALES."

"In the September issue the best story was undoubtedly *The Moon Menace*," writes Fred W. Fischer, Jr., of Knoxville, Tennessee, "though it was closely pressed for this honor by Sax Rohmer's weird Oriental story, *Lord of the Jackals*. I wish to congratulate you on your new artist, Hugh Rankin."

Edward T. Radcliffe, of Portsmouth, Virginia, writes to The Eyrie: "I am so enthusiastic about WEIRD TALES that I want to write and let you know just how much I appreciate it. I started reading it about a year ago and since then I have been a booster for it from the ground up. It is so different from the usual type of magazine—the stories take you from the everyday realms of life. It is a pity that it only comes out once a month. My favorite authors are Seabury Quinn, Eli Colter and Greye La Spina. Let's have some more stories of the exploits of Jules De Grandin. They are excellent—but Colter's *The Dark Chrysalis* is one of the best stories I ever read."

"I have been a reader of WEIRD TALES a long time," writes Grace M. Wise, of Corbett, Oregon, "and of all the magazines I read, it is my favorite.

(Continued on page 714)

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Despair and the Soul

LEAVENWORTH MACNAB

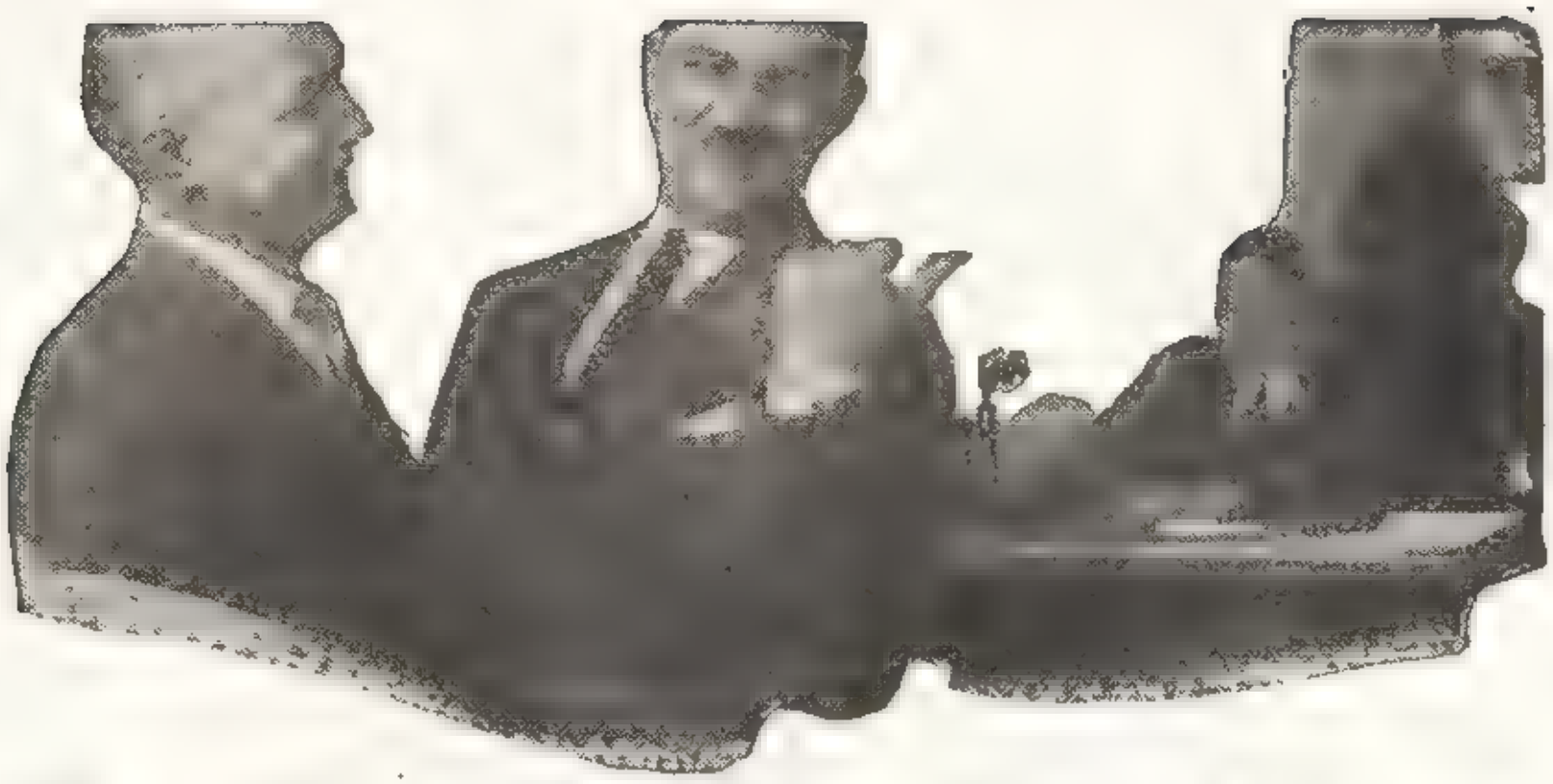
She comes to me in the midnight oft, when the pleasures of day are fled
And their dregs leave bitterest longing and unspeakable regret—
A hopeless, hung'ring yearning that in vain I would forget—
Then the mists back roll, and my naked soul with her presence is beset.

Her eyes outrival the mist-moonshine in their silken, soulless glow;
The tints of the yellow autumn cling to her billowy hair;
Cold as the hand of Death, with no life-light lingering there,
Is her ashen cheek, and the wan lips speak ever Despair, Despair.

She points me back to the far-fled past—a weary waste outspun—
Where unfinished tasks are lying that my hands had cast aside,
And smoldering ashes, telling where the old ambitions died
When the scarlet flame of carnal shame to the heart was made a bride;

And onward points to the nearing end where shadows close and cling,
While my shriveling form stands quaking on the brink of the black unknown:
Afar, like glints of Dawning, Life's Ideal Heights are shown
But hope has fled, for the soul lies dead where the wasted days are strown.

And I shudder back in the ghostly arms and the soulless eyes I seek,
Which gleam 'neath the yellow autumn tints that cling to the billowy hair,
Cold as the hand of Death, with no hope-light lingering there,
Is the ashen face, and the wan lips trace ever Despair, Despair.



They Thought I Was A Weak Sister
-But I Took Their Breath Away!

ALL of a sudden the office was very quiet, as sometimes happens for an instant or two, and a few words reached me. "Oh, he won't dare kick," the manager was saying, "he's a pretty weak sister."

Mechanically I went on with my work, wondering vaguely who the weak sister could be. A new man had just been hired for our department and desks were being moved to make room for him. A minute later I looked up and saw the chief clerk standing at my side. "Bob," he crisply ordered, "move your desk back in that corner. I want this space for the new assistant I've hired." Then he turned and strode away.

I gulped and wilted down into my chair. *I* was the weak sister! And I was actually being demoted! The new man was being hired for *my* place! This was my reward for all my hard work—this was how I won out by waiting patiently for my turn to be promoted. I had even congratulated myself on my close-lipped, reserved manner—I thought I was showing strength of character by sticking to my work and not trying to push myself—to show off.

And that was the whole trouble. I had plenty of steel in my makeup, but I had no ability to express myself. I was timid, self-conscious, and actually afraid of my own voice. I would study out the office problems and find solutions for our difficulties, but I didn't know how to present these ideas to the man up ahead. Several of the boys who had started at the time I did were now department managers—because they had the knack of forceful speech, self-confidence and personality—the very qualities I lacked.

It made me good and mad—and I resolved to show them—to get rid, once and for all, of my timidity and shyness—my bashfulness and lack of poise.

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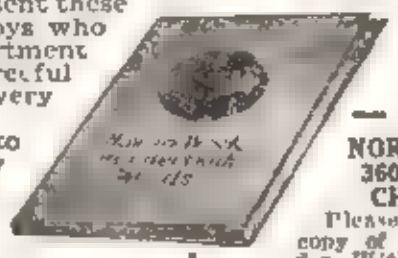

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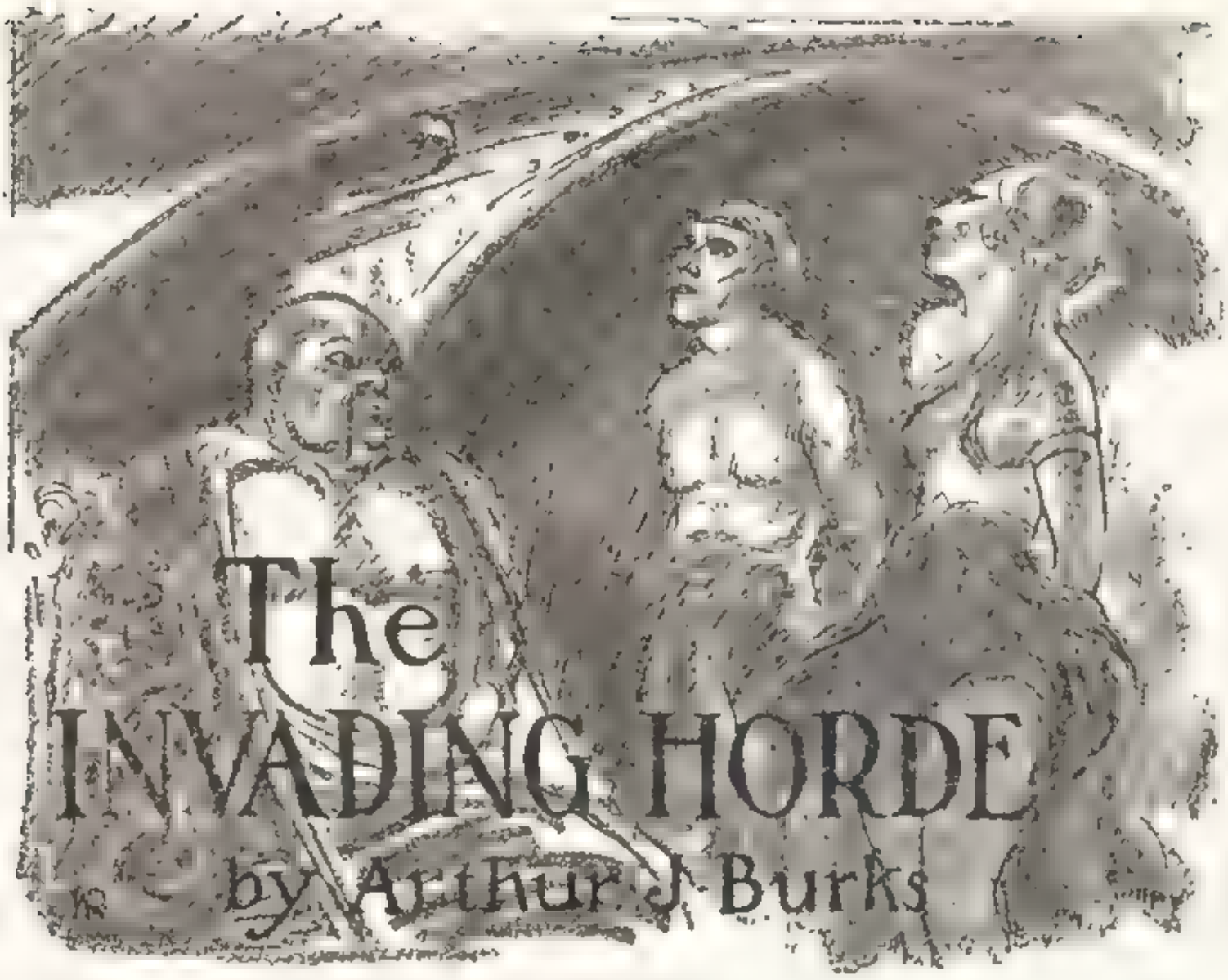


"I leave you to choose the manner of your death."

"YOU see before you," said Sark Darlin, with a gesture toward his office window, "the realization of a dream that endured for a thousand years. Eighteen generations of long-lived architects have had their part in the dream, and through that window you see the result."

Of course I had seen it before, but I never tired of it. Sark Darlin had reason to be proud. The culmination, this man, of a thousand years of specialization. He was old, and his wife had given him no man-child to carry on the family tradition. The growth of City of the East would die with Sark Darlin, and a little of the sadness of it showed in his face as he beckoned me to the window. I, as his son-in-law, must take up the torch he must relinquish, but I—I was not a Darlin, and the pill was a bitter one for Sark to swallow. Yet he loved me, else he never would have allowed my addresses to his daughter—for that is the law.

His hand was on my shoulder as we stood side by side and gazed from the window. We were in his office on the top floor of the Executive Building, five hundred stories above ground level. Outside the window, the platform for the landing of monopters thrust outward into space. Looking downward beyond the edge of the platform I could see the other platforms below, one at each window, scores and scores of them, like perches before the uncountable doors of some mighty Gargantuan dovecote. Straight across

from our window yet well below it, since the Executive Building is the tallest in all the City, were other platforms, and as we talked there, watching, men and women and children, like monster bees, dropped from windows in their monopters, and glided across to this or that window in the Executive Building. All the windows were numbered or marked with other distinguishing signs. It was like this throughout the whole City, so that the great and awesome canyons between the buildings were fairly alive with flitting and industrious people, going about their mysterious business speedily and in silence.

Over the top of the building opposite I could see some of the other buildings, their spires glistening in the sun, now visible, now obscured as wraiths of white clouds, like fingers of some bodiless entity of space, moved into and along the canyons. Below the spires, many stories below, there often were clouds, shutting out the world beneath, so that at times, looking from this window, it was as though our building had been cut in twain somewhere below us, leaving us here in space, immovable. At such times as these the myriad noises of the City were muffled, as well they might be, when one considers the depth of the great canyons. But even then, when impenetrable fog held the whole city in its grip, the noises came up to us, even through the almost sound-proof walls of Sark Darlin's office. A vast, voiceless roar, as though some subterranean monster, imprisoned in a pit that was bottomless, cried out in agony at his restraint. But the clouds, white misty draperies, sent their tentacles into the canyons and paid no heed. While the clouds were passing through, it was always interesting to watch the monopters, each encasing a human being, stand upright on the platform, patiently waiting for the mists to lift or move on. With clouds in the canyons it was virtually suicide to attempt a crossing from one platform to another. Sark Darlin, I knew, had all but perfected a device whereby monopters might be directed at will toward a fixed destination, but the purpose of the invention had been defeated because, among the mists, monopters might collide and their occupants be hurled to the depths. As we watched there, while I sensed, without looking, that the face of Sark Darlin was radiant with pardonable pride, the platforms opposite were fairly aswarm with monopters waiting for the mists to lift or clear. Like doves standing before their cotes. It was impossible, of course, to tell which were men and which were women. Not that it mattered, especially, for in the City of the East there is no difference between them, save the fundamental difference of sex, and women and men work side by side. Sark has told me, he having read extensively, that this was not so, long ago; but Sark is getting old, and I have never believed it. To me it is inconceivable that women were once considered to be of a lower order than men—or the other way around. My principal reason for loving the daughter of Darlin is that she can do everything that I can do.

"See, Gerd?" he pointed vaguely beyond the window. "The City of the East! The greatest city of all time! The realization of a dream of my first recorded ancestor. Would that he lived today to see his dream in truth as he must have seen it then in his mind! He promised himself, this dreamer-ancestor of mine, to dedicate his life to the building of this City which lies before you, and the tradition was passed on to his son, and from him to *his* son, and the line has never been broken. Only now is it threatened, because my time is coming. Lona is my only offspring.

To her, and to you, I tender the torch which has burned brightly through all the generations of the Darlins. You, and she, must carry on."

Something of the solemnity of the thing entered into me there as we stood by the window. I stood like a statue, his hand resting on my shoulder, harkening to the myriad sounds of the City that persisted in invading the silence of Sark Darlin's office—and realized a little of the tremendous responsibility that was one day to rest on my shoulders. I shook off the feeling, however, in a moment, and gazed into the old man's eyes.

"Nonsense!" I said sharply. "You have twenty years of active service before you yet. You are only sixty-five!"

"Sixty-five," he repeated. "That is young, I know. Ordinarily I should live to twice that age. But I have led a strenuous life, and I shall welcome the chance to leave it behind me. I have received warnings——"

He pressed his white hand, slim and graceful as Lona's, against his heart. A pang shot through me. I wondered if something of his affliction might not have been passed on to Lona. To win her for my own, only to lose her to Death! But I shook myself impatiently. Lona was too young, too replete with health and brimming vitality.

"So," continued Darlin, "you must study City of the East as an artizan studies craftsmanship. Every spare hour must be spent in the air, learning all there is to learn about this City in whose future you will have such an active part. The sun is high now, my son, so drop off and busy yourself. This is a tremendous responsibility I am passing on to you."

I fancied I read a vague hint in his voice as he said it, as though he somehow doubted his choice of a successor—and decided instantly that, before he should leave us, I would erase any lingering doubt of me his heart might harbor. Now, however, there were other things to do. He had bade me go, and to obey his slightest wish was my law—since I was soon to become his son-in-law. We stepped back from the window and Darlin kept up a running fire of conversation, while I stepped into my monopter and adjusted the filament wires to the headpiece which, last of all, would be set in place, closing the monopter to all sound save that which was transmitted by the mechanism of the wireless telephone inside the headpiece.

With Sark Darlin's words ringing in my ears I stepped to the window. Darlin opened it and closed it swiftly behind me. I was alone on the platform, preparing myself for the duty to follow. To see and to learn, and to remember, and the whole of City of the East was my place of operation. Added to this duty, which I loved, was the anticipation of again seeing Lona, who had promised to meet me at the fifty thousand foot air lane, directly east of the Executive Building, at the edge of the Great Rampart which holds back the rising waters of the vast Atlantic—our usual trysting place where, hand in hand, communing by telephone, we were accustomed to flying far out to sea, beyond the usual range of other monopters, where we might enjoy the privacy our love demanded. From day to day I lived in anticipation of that winging flight outward from the Great Rampart in which, like a Lord and Lady of Creation, we talked lovers' nonsense and looked down upon the vast dominion we were to inherit from Sark Darlin.

My heart was all aflutter as I stood on the platform, waiting for the mists to disperse slightly before

leaping into space. I knew that behind me Sark Darlin stood by the window, wishing me a silent Godspeed.

The monopter, as you must know, is nothing more nor less than a slip-over suit of specially prepared material which, equipped with a tiny atomic engine resting compactly behind and between the shoulders of the wearer, keeps out the cold of the higher altitudes. No one has yet found it necessary to ascend to any altitude greater than fifty thousand feet, which is almost the ceiling for monopters. There are air lanes below this level, a lane for each two hundred feet, in fact, and each type of monopter, passenger and freight, keeps to its particular level, assigned by law, the monopters of the various trades and strata of society being designated by words on the outside of each monopter as, for example: "Engineer, Air Lane 50,000", or, "Building Level 200, Air Lane 35,000". This last indicates that the occupant of the monopter is a man or woman from that City level indicated by the two hundredth story of City buildings, assigned by law to Air Lane 35,000, which is to say, that monopters from this level must confine themselves to an elevation not greater than 35,000 feet. The first designation is virtually self-explanatory, indicating that the Engineers, whose business is the building of the City of the East to still grander proportions, are allowed to ascend to the highest lane, whence they are enabled to view everything below them, which includes every activity known at present to the City of the East. I am of the Engineers, soon to be the head of the Guild, through my marriage to Lona Darlin. But in reference to the monopter: as I say, it is no more than a slip-over suit, entirely enclosing the occupant, and the motive power is supplied by a small, compact, atomic engine, an invention of Sark Darlin, and is guided and directed by tiny buttons inside the finger-tips of the right glove. In the air the monopter and its occupant are one entity, directed by one brain. Lenses of specially prepared material, with fused quartz as the principal alloy, allow the eyes of the occupant full view in all directions, or as far as the eyes may swerve in any direction. To look at the rear requires a turning of the entire monopter. From which it may be seen that a person in the air is virtually the same in appearance as a person on the ground, free of the monopter, with the exception of the slight enlargement of the head and torso, caused by the covering which houses the engine of propulsion and the mechanism of the headpiece. It is as though man had suddenly lifted into the air on invisible wings, and when all the monopters of the City of the East are in the air, which seldom happens at one time, the City resembles more than ever a gigantic dovecote, with its inhabitants circling about in preparation for landing, filling the air to the very crest of Air Lane 50,000. An awe-inspiring sight, even when, as I am, one is accustomed to it.

Standing on the platform before Sark Darlin's window, I was glad that I had locked myself securely inside my monopter, for I was slightly giddy with my thoughts, inspired by the stupendous responsibility soon to be mine, and, in my excitement, might have fallen from the platform. This would have been disastrous had I, as I sometimes did, left the fastening of the headpiece of the monopter until I had taken my place on the narrow platform. Now, however, it would have been perfectly safe to step off into space and drop like a plummet, for to slacken speed required but the pressure of finger on button, so that I would have landed at the bottom of this great canyon as

lightly as a feather fluttering downward.

It has always been a great moment for me, a thrilling moment, to stand on the platform before leaping outward. From far below comes the bellowing voice of the City, welling up like thunder from the depths, rattling the very headpiece about my ears, causing my whole body to tremble, so that the platform under my feet seems to sway as though some invisible hand is shaking it from side to side. A cloud of snowy whiteness passes through the canyon below me, blotting out some of the sound, shutting out the world below, so that it seems the world as I know it has its foundation in space, with spires and towers afloat in the whiteness, a City in the air. The moving of the clouds gives the sense of motion, so that, as I gaze at the building across from me, it seems to be leaning in my direction, so that I have an insane desire to leap into space before it shall have toppled against the Executive Building and both shall have fallen crashing into the canyon. Even the Executive Building seems to be moving, as though it tilted away from me, toppling me forward, so that I unconsciously lean backward to keep from falling over the edge. It is intoxicating and I never tire of this experience. But a tapping sound comes through the phones and I turn to look at the window through which I have just stepped. Sark Darlin is tapping the window with one hand, while his other hand makes a sweeping gesture which bids me soar aloft on the business assigned me. Thus, in a gesture, I am brought back to the matter in hand, recalled to a mission that never becomes humdrum.

However, just for the joy of falling, I step to the edge of the platform and lean forward until the pull of gravitation topples me from my perch and I go plummeting downward. I always revel, dropping thus, in the thought that there may be something wrong with my monopter and that I shall not be able to halt my downward flight. I might have failed to connect some all-important filament, a failure that would assuredly spell disaster. But when I decide to check my falling, speed slackens gradually until, by an effort of will, I am moving in the opposite direction, upward. Once this is accomplished the matter is simple. I keep on climbing, straight into the clouds.

My flight upward is uninterrupted, for the aerial traffic laws compel monopters already in the air to keep out of the way of monopters ascending or descending while, in the up and down traffic, descending monopters keep out of the way of those ascending.

So in a few moments, I find my monopter becoming almost stationary, indicating that I have reached Air Lane 50,000 or the ceiling for monopters, 50,000 feet above ground level. Here for a moment I tilt forward to peer down. What a magnificent sight! No wonder Sark Darlin is proud! Air lane after air lane, each alive with its myriads of flitting, darting monopters, as the individuals occupying them scurry here and there toward unknown destinations. A veritable cloud, black layer upon black layer, extending downward to swathe the very buildings of the City of the East. A cloud, moreover, through which it is easy to get glimpses of the City itself.

As I have said before, the highest building is the Executive Building, 500 stories, almost in the mathematical center of the City. All about this building are grouped the others, many of them far more massive, most of them in fact, since

Executive Building is more like a slender spire than a building—and they vary in height from two hundred and fifty stories to four hundred and ninety, the latter building being an annex to the Executive Building, housing the subordinates and apprentices of the Engineers, who themselves are housed in the Executive Building. This latter building, with its sprawling annex, is the most industrious hive in all the City. Its work is the City's progress. Its officials are the City Administrators.

A City of spires, of great heights, cloud-wreathed, reaching to all the horizons. A city of mighty canyons, since the invention of monopters made it possible to remove the suspension bridges of my father's time. A City—but I find this the best simile: it is as though a great piece of cardboard, cut to represent, on a tiny scale, all the country lying between the Atlantic and the Mississippi, so-named in ancient times, and extending into the region of cold to the north and the region of the tropics to the south—and this cardboard literally obliterated from view by pins thrust upward from the underside, a vast pin-cushion with all the points extending outward. Only the pins of the simile are the towers and spires of the City of the East. The sun glistening on the spires bears out the simile, for the spires shine in its rays like pin-pricks of silver, deluging the sky with silvery glamor. A marvelous creation, full-sprung from the brain of eighteen generations of Darlins.

But I turn for the flight into the East where, at the edge of the Great Rampart, I have an appointment with Lona. Together, after our lonely flight, hand in hand, across the waters of the Atlantic, we will come back across the City of the East, which we must one day govern, to examine the Invisible Frontier. This frontier, if I may explain in passing, is that invisible line of demarcation, beyond which people of the West may not come—for they are aliens. These people are the races of color, which occupy all the country west of the Mississippi, representing the descendants of the races of color who, centuries ago, all but overthrew the people of the American white race. Only the foresight of one of the Darlins prevented this racial catastrophe. He had already caused the installation of the Invisible Frontier.

In itself the frontier is simplicity. At each quarter-mile along its length is a tiny station housing a corps of engineers, whose duty it is to see that the mechanism of the aerial ray producers do not fail. These rays, which are invisible, are hurled into the sky to a height twice that of the ceiling of the most perfect monopter, and played back and forth so that it would be impossible for any person of the West to pass through the Invisible Wall, for to attempt such a foolhardy thing would be death. No monopter has yet been perfected which is able to pass through this wall of rays. Certain foolhardy people of the West have tried it, only to have their monopters, less perfect than ours, melt away from about them, allowing the occupants to plummet to the earth—a painless death after all, since even before the beginning of the downward plunge, the occupant of the offending monopter has been burned to a cinder.

Only through a traitor along the Invisible Frontier would the invasion of the people of the West be possible. We have long known that the scientists of this country of the West have been trying to perfect machines capable of passing through the frontier, for these people breed like flies, and must eventually find some place for their expanding population or perish. But the possi-

bility of a traitor, a man or woman who would deliver the City of the East into the hands of the races of color, would be unthinkable. The attack, when it does come, must be from another direction and—but one shudders to think of such a catastrophe.

So I thought as I fled eastward toward the Great Rampart, little guessing that already an attack was being launched, and that Lona and I were to witness the very first contact.

2

THE speed of my monopter is three hundred miles an hour, so that it is a pleasure jaunt from the center of City of the East to the edge of the Great Rampart—a pleasure jaunt all the more pleasant because I know I shall find Lona at my destination. Lona! There is romance in her very name! This flesh and blood woman sired by Sark Darlin, the greatest living architect, to whom he was soon to turn over the vast responsibilities inherent in his dreams. To Lona, and to myself, as one after the marriage which should take place very soon; but never too soon to please me. Lona! The bright-cheeked girl of the golden hair, and the form of a goddess of the olden times, when men had not yet conquered the air lanes, but crawled slowly along the ground in liquid-driven, clumsy vehicles, or soared to unimportant heights in unwieldy machines even more clumsy. Lona, whose very name spoke of perfection! And I was hurrying into the East to keep my daily tryst with her.

Already, far ahead, I could see the mists which shroud the shoreline of the Atlantic, and was glancing about me among the hurrying myriads of monopters, seeking that which bore upon its crest the swastika-and-star which is the signal of the house of Darlin. Only Sark Darlin himself, who rarely makes use of the monopter of his own invention, and Lona, may wear the insignia of the star superimposed upon the swastika. The significance of the signal has been lost in antiquity; but the whole City of the East knows that inside the monopter marked with the swastika-and-star is Lona, the promised bride of Gerd Sota, myself.

So, speeding eastward, with now and then a glance downward into the vast canyons of City of the East, evading the streams of other monopters to right and left of me by instinct, I pondered the matter. I wonder now, as I look back upon that flight, whether I didn't really harbor some slight intuition of the catastrophe so soon to follow. Perhaps. Else why had the thought of attack obtruded itself upon my consciousness? Men and women in other monopters at my level, all of them belonging to this lane because of their importance in the City of the East, raised their arms to me in passing, and I returned their silent greetings abstractedly. The word had already gone forth, I could see, that Gerd Sota was soon to take the place of Sark Darlin as chief administrator of City of the East, and these greetings from the other monopters were silent pledges of fealty. Soon the very least of these would carry out orders originating with me, or with Lona.

But I was approaching the Great Rampart, which merits a brief description. The first noticeable rising of the waters of the Atlantic is shrouded in remote antiquity. Suffice it that the first Darlin took cognizance and caused the first stones of the Great Rampart to be laid. At first it was only a great wall, a thousand feet in width and two hundred feet of elevation, a fortress against the ocean. From

which I know that the rising of the waters had been an exceedingly slow progress, since the base of that first wall is at the present moment but fifty feet below the surface of the Atlantic. I can, however, but marvel at the foresight of the first inspired Darlin, for even that fifty feet of rise would have spelled disaster had there been no wall. However, as time passed, and as the population of the City of the East increased, and especially after the invasion of the races of color, when the white race was driven back from the Pacific, back behind the Mississippi, at whose farther side the Invisible Frontier had already been installed, and beyond which the races of color could not penetrate, it became increasingly evident that, because the people of the white race literally covered the ground level, the only possible expansion must be upward.

Under the leadership of a Darlin, every able-bodied man and woman was pressed into service. Hills and mountains were leveled overnight, and from the very bowels of the earth came the materials which went into building of the Great Rampart. From great depths they came, those materials, for this far-sighted Darlin wished to preserve as much of the native soil as was humanly possible from which to get the food to feed the City of his dreams. And as his myriad army of laborers moved westward from the first Great Rampart, the wall itself was broadened, and on its first humble beginnings, that thousand-foot-wide barrier, was erected the first series of the then highest buildings in all the world. But the first one was an insignificant hundred and fifty stories, so that our shoreline, which should really be a thing of beauty, is but a drab collection of time-worn, ill-shaped, comparatively tiny buildings.

But that was a beginning. And with this as a starting-point the wall itself was extended, so that today the ground is invisible, and the bottom of the deepest canyon in the City is two hundred feet above ground level. Beneath this level expanse of imperishable stone are the Menials, subjugated peoples who toil in slavery to feed the multitudes above them. One wonders at the fears which must ever be with them, when they realize the number of uncountable tons of material which hover over them. But all they see are the great pilings which are the foundations of the Great Rampart, upon which, in turn, the buildings of the City of the East have been erected. These pilings, so Sark Darlin has told me, are of slenderness unbelievable; but the matter of stresses and strains has been worked out so carefully that there is little doubt that the City will stand, immovable, for centuries yet to come. The slenderness was made necessary in order that every available bit of ground might be cultivated. The Menials are never allowed above ground level, and are the only inhabitants of City of the East who are denied the use of monopters.

So, to sum it all up, the Great Rampart, except where it sets flush with hills of solid stone left by the builders, extends from the shore of the Atlantic to what was the Mississippi before its waters were diverted to the use of the white race. It is a veritable White City, and no ground at all is visible, save that which may be seen when the waters of the Atlantic are clear, extending from the shore to that point where they vanish into the depths.

Some day City of the East will extend still farther eastward, for on our journeys, Lona's and mine, over the waters, we have discussed this possibility of further vanquishing the waters, driving them back be-

fore a moving wall of stone. But all that is in the future. It will be my problem, God willing, and Lona's; for day by day people are being born, faster than they die, so that, inevitably, City of the East must grow to house its myriads of inhabitants.

Among other duties, I must strive to familiarize myself with the duties of the Menials; but that will come later. I must know, Sark Darlin tells me, something of the vast quantities of food necessary to sustain the life of City of the East, so that I can plan against the future, when the population will be too great to feed under present arrangements. Another glimpse of the varied responsibility which is to be mine——

"GERD! Gerd!"

Musically the name beats against my eardrums from the phones. I know that marvelous voice. Somewhere among the monopters which hem me in, Lona is calling my name, directing the sound into space, seeking me. She knows that I should be in this vicinity now, and that in a few minutes I should catch her signal.

"Gerd! Gerd!"

I know that she is approaching, from somewhere off to my right, as I can tell by my direction finder. So, upon the membrane which presses tightly against my lips, I speak her name, putting into its pronunciation all of the love I bear her.

"Lona! Beloved!"

"Wait, Gerd! I am coming!"

So I slacken my terrific speed into the East, remaining virtually motionless, as I revolve slowly, seeking among the myriads of monopters for that on whose crest is the sign of the swastika-and-star. I locate it finally, far below, off to the right, shooting up toward me from perhaps the five thousand foot level, the monopter which causes my heart to leap with excitement. For on its crest, gleaming in the sun, is the sign of the swastika-and-star. I raise my arms and touch my fingers above my head, holding the pose until Lona has picked me out—a pre-arranged signal between us. For, being below me, she can not see my own insignia, unless I stand on my head, which is unpleasant if one must hold the position for any length of time. She waves her hand to indicate that she has seen my signal, and in a moment her monopter is beside mine, and, hand in hand, we continue the dash into the East, toward the shoreline which is now visible, with the vast blue canvas beyond, a canvas extended to north and south to be lost in the mists of distance, paralleled by the Great Rampart as far as the eye can see, even when aided by the magnifying qualities of the eye-lenses that glide into place when I will it.

"Gerd!" it is almost a whisper, scarcely breathing through the phones.

My heart fills, unaccountably, with a feeling of dread. Lona is alarmed. There is no mistaking that fact. She has witnessed something dreadful while awaiting my arrival. But I wait for her to tell me.

"Gerd," and I know she is striving for control to tell her story, "I thought you would never come, dear. You are on time, sweetheart—I am not censuring you. But I have been in agony because there was no one to whom I dared entrust this news of mine. I could have sent the message to Father Sark; but there was a chance that it might be picked up by some enemy and my purpose defeated. That's why I am now talking to you in our own private code. For all I know, though it may be a silly woman's fears, the monopters all about us may encase the persons of enemies or traitors."

She paused, and my heart leaped again because of her absolute trust in me; because she believed that I, Gerd Sota, would know the proper thing to do. But I knew that, had I not arrived as arranged, Lona herself would undoubtedly have done whatever was necessary, and she would have made no error in judgment. I waited, wondering, in dread, for her to continue.

But she said no more. She merely gripped my hand, and I fancied, though it was more mental suggestion than speech, that the phones carried to my ears the single whispered word: "Speed!"

For side by side, our hands clasped tightly, we were rushing eastward with a speed such as I never before had flown. The other monopters in this air lane seemed to go back from us as we passed, as though they had been standing still; yet I knew that they traveled at a speed in excess of two hundred miles an hour. It was like traveling through a veritable fog of monopters, held in aerial suspension. But the swastika-and-star on Lona's crest assured us of a clear right of way, so that there was no danger of collision, even had I not released the outside buzzer which cast a radio warning forth into the air, so that monopters in our path would draw aside.

Speed, speed, speed! The air through which we fled met us like a wall. Right below us now was the edge of the Great Rampart, its white immensity bathed in flying spume at its ponderous base, as the waves, mountain-high because of a gathering storm, threshed out their futile strength against that stony inspiraion of the first of the Darlins. But we did not pause. Lona gripped my hand, so that I turned to look into her eyes. It is difficult to see eyes through the intervening lenses of two monopters, but I could see Lona's as though their very intensity of gaze commanded. They were large and frightened, and as soon as she knew I had seen, she raised her free arm and pointed out to sea.

Then I noticed an odd phenomenon. The beating of the waves against the Great Rampart was only a local disturbance, covering a distance of perhaps five miles to right and left of where we were—and ten miles out to sea the surface of the Atlantic was as smooth as a millpond! It was unbelievable. As though some monster of the deep faced this particular portion of the Great Rampart and lashed a mighty tail in fury, causing the waters to crash against the immovable stone, breaking high along the face of the Great Rampart, bathing it in flying, angry spume. What had caused this vast disturbance? What mighty upheaval in the depths of Mother Atlantic was thus arousing her ancient displeasure? And, catching a glimpse again of Lona's face, I saw that it was white and set—and a little of her abject fear communicated itself to me through our clasped hands.

"What is it, Lona? For God's sake tell me!"

"Wait!"

I knew then that she intended showing me, and dread was at my throat again. I knew that I was destined to witness some monstrous thing. Yet why should I be afraid? Lona, undoubtedly, had already seen; yet she was going back—with me! Some of her invincible courage imparted itself to me with the thought, so that I resolved, come what might, to live up to her faith—and to dispel the haunting doubt of Sark Darlin, which I had detected in his voice as he had wished me Godspeed at the beginning of my flight from the Executive Building.

Now we were hurtling straight out to sea while, looking backward with a swift turn of my head, I could see that the waves still broke as high as ever against the Great Rampart. But I could not see into the depths, here. It was as though all the ocean were a-boil, lashing the surface to a white foam, so that only the surface was visible. What monstrous thing wallowed just below us, invisible below the mantle of white which made of this section of the coast a boiling cauldron?

Lona again grasped my hand tightly. Our speed slackened, as though her will had dominated mine, so that I slackened my own monopter instinctively.

"Look down, Gerd!" she said. "Below the surface! Study the depths as soon as we are far enough out to be beyond the milky whiteness of the boiling water. Move slowly, or we may pass it!"

What did she mean? I was soon to know, for gradually the whiteness of the puzzling boiling faded, so that, here and there, I caught glimpses of the blue of the depths, into which, at intervals, I could penetrate with my eyes. I pressed my free hand to a button outside my headpiece, and powerful lenses dropped into place before my eyes. I had only aped Lona in this, for I had seen her own eyes vanish behind opacity as she did the same thing. We were both virtually motionless in the air now, except that we dropped gradually downward, leaning forward both, so that our view beneath would be unobstructed.

I almost leaped free of my monopter when I saw the thing! It was monstrous.

A submarine such as the wildest nightmare might not have conceived! Even at the depth at which it must have been lying, for we were several miles from shore, the reflection of the sun's rays from the elliptical body of the thing was blinding. It must have been all of a mile in length, and it rested on the bottom, broadside to the shore and the Great Rampart, a silvery mass of what looked to be a mountain of gleaming steel! A metal monster beyond all imagining. There was no propeller that I could see, though, taking its vast size into consideration, it was now not inconceivable that the thing might be provided with a myriad of metal legs, on which it had walked the ocean's floor, following the coastline from—where? It was not hard to guess, when one took into consideration the desperate necessity of the races of color to secure the vast country in which was City of the East.

The more I thought of it the more I was sure that the metal thing was possessed of legs; that it was a senseless amphibian. It had probably followed the coast into the south from some place on the North Pacific, thence by land across the neck connecting the two great Americas. Reason tottered as I strove to fancy this great thing walking across the Isthmus, trampling whole mountains under foot, wiping out cities and towns which stood in the way. But what was it doing here? Its activities were making a boiling cauldron of this portion of the ocean; but how?

In the instant of asking the question I knew the answer. For by scores and hundreds there darted from the massive side of the thing, under water, egg-shaped things not unlike our own monopters. Tiny submarines, these, each with a man inside it! That was the answer. There were thousands of them, so that, darting into the deep water, visible until they had entered the boiling area to be lost from view, they looked like a vast school of speedy fish, darting headlong toward that section of the Great Rampart

upon which the waves were breaking their crests into wisps of flying spume. That boiling had been induced for the express purpose of masking from the view of our aerial scouts whatever the enemy was doing.

Even as one school of the tiny submarines darted into the whiteness, another emerged from it, dashing against the side of the metal monster to be taken in and absorbed. Like a great fish spawning, then receiving her young into her body again. Even as I thought this, my brain working furiously to find a solution, school after school of them broke from the whiteness and were lost in the side of the monster.

Inside my left glove, which is part of the monopter, my fingers worked like mad upon the tiny instrument with which, in the air, I keep in contact with Sark Darlin. I gave him the section of the rampart where the mysterious activity was going on, and a brief description of the monster in the slime below, of the tiny submarines which, their work already accomplished perhaps, were returning to the mother sub with the speed of game fish.

Faintly to my ears came the answer of Sark Darlin.

"I have your message. I am acting. Watch the Big Submarine!"

By the renewed pressure on my hand I knew that Lona, too, had caught her father's message. Motionless there, both leaning forward, watching the metal monster feverishly, we were totally unprepared for what followed. For behind us, with a roar that made the very air about us a seething maelstrom, a five-mile section of the Great Rampart, carrying with it the hundred and fifty story buildings of early days, leaped skyward and crashed back again, a smoking, powdery ruin—into which, on the instant, poured the mighty Atlantic to fill the breach!

Simultaneously the surface of the seething ocean became a welter of dismembered, horribly mangled corpses. But all that I could see were nude. Sark Darlin, then, had acted in time, when he had had but seconds in which to do so. Only the unimportant Menials had suffered from the catastrophe.

A monster wave, breaking against the broken wall beyond the breach, rolled back to sea—a veritable mountain of water. I saw it crash against the metal monster in the depths. Swiftly she heeled over—and I knew my first guess had been correct. Metal legs waved in sight for a few moments as the thing strove to right itself. Then they disappeared, in all their monstrous bigness and tentacle-like waving, as the submarine came back, upright and, with the same motion, swerved to the right, to disappear like some unbelievable deep-sea fish, into the darkness of the Atlantic!

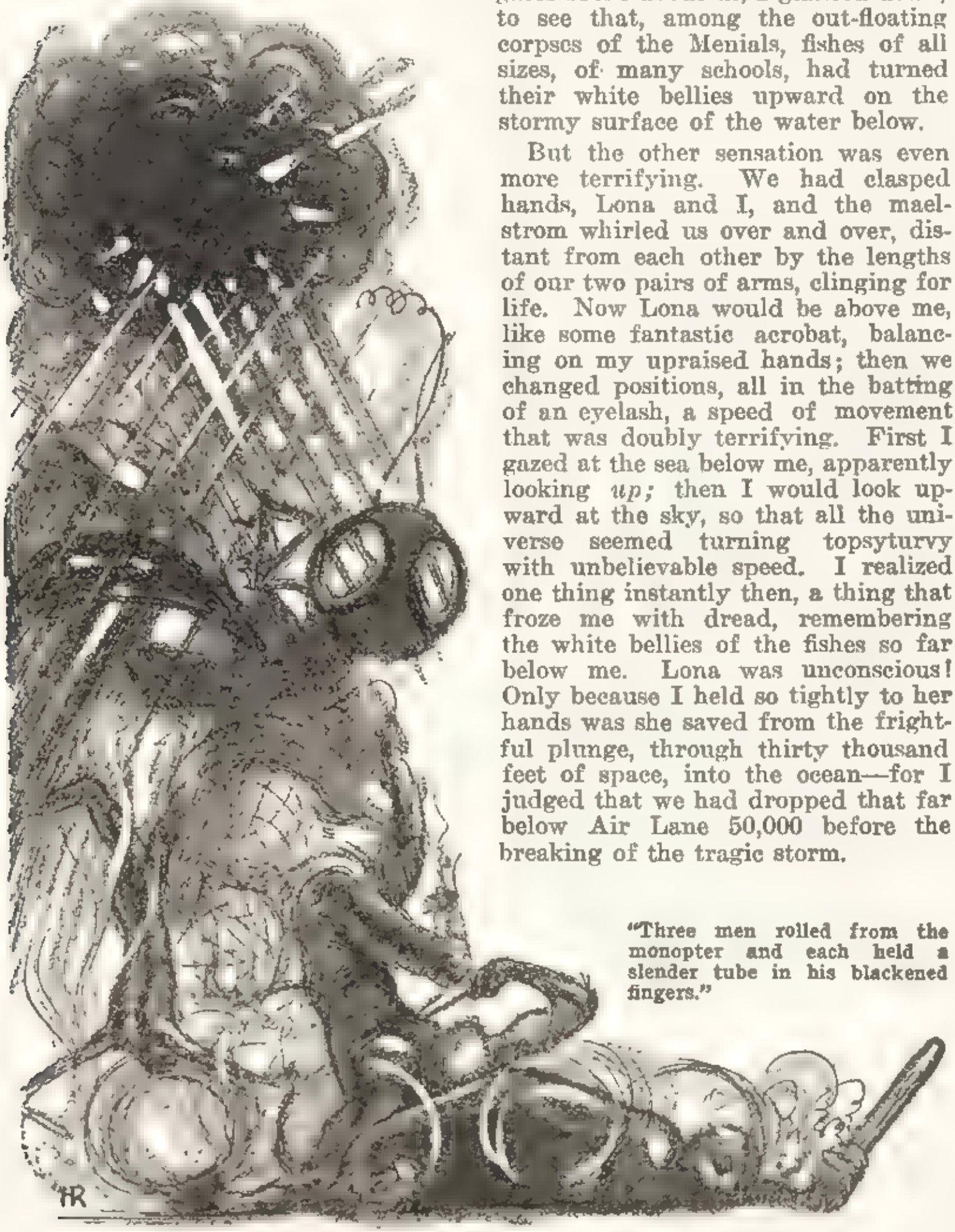
3

A KIND providence must have been with us at that moment; for we faced each other and I took her hands in mine, while our eyes met in questioning and horror. I am sure that this involuntary, instinctive clasp of hands saved the life of Lona. In the instant of the clasp, while those soundless messages passed between us, the aerial maelstrom caused by the explosion and attendant rupture of the Great Rampart was upon us—a shock such as I hope never again to feel.

The noise of City of the East is a vast and awesome thing when one hears it without the ears protected; multiply that sound by a thousand and you have some idea of the shock which that explosion caused us, and we almost ten miles off-shore from the breach in the wall. It was like being instantly compressed in a monster vise, with all the fiends

above and below the earth hurling gibes into the teeth of the sufferer, so that palsied hands fly to ears and fill them to save the hearing. One wonders at the massive strength of that great submarine, that it was not riven in twain at the explosion; for even as the swirl and crush of the gases broke about us, I glanced down, to see that, among the out-floating corpses of the Menials, fishes of all sizes, of many schools, had turned their white bellies upward on the stormy surface of the water below.

But the other sensation was even more terrifying. We had clasped hands, Lona and I, and the maelstrom whirled us over and over, distant from each other by the lengths of our two pairs of arms, clinging for life. Now Lona would be above me, like some fantastic acrobat, balancing on my upraised hands; then we changed positions, all in the batting of an eyelash, a speed of movement that was doubly terrifying. First I gazed at the sea below me, apparently looking *up;* then I would look upward at the sky, so that all the universe seemed turning topsyturvy with unbelievable speed. I realized one thing instantly then, a thing that froze me with dread, remembering the white bellies of the fishes so far below me. Lona was unconscious! Only because I held so tightly to her hands was she saved from the frightful plunge, through thirty thousand feet of space, into the ocean—for I judged that we had dropped that far below Air Lane 50,000 before the breaking of the tragic storm.



"Three men rolled from the monopter and each held a slender tube in his blackened fingers."

Was Lona dead? Could I support her dead weight and transport us back to some safe platform in City of the East? I'd do it, I told myself, or plunge with her to the depths. For if she fell from me I had no desire to live. So I clung to her and prayed.

Slowly, when the swirling of the aerial maelstrom had abated somewhat, so that I found myself once more in a state of equilibrium, Lona hanging before me, her head against my limbs, I faced toward City of the East and drove my monopter toward safety. Was she dead? Could I maintain my grasp upon her hands? Would the mechanism of my monopter support us both? The answer to the last question was capable of a speedy solution. We were making excellent time toward the shore; but we were losing altitude with fearful rapidity—a planing glide that seemed endless.

It seemed hours; but reason told me but a few minutes had passed, before I sank, all but exhausted, on a platform of a building just westward of the breach in the rampart, with the still unconscious Lona clinging to my hands. I sat down weakly and held her in my arms.

All this time my phones had been transmitting a message from Sark Darlin; but I could not use my hands to answer him. He was asking after my safety and Lona's, and for information about the great submarine. Clasping Lona the more tightly with my right hand, for the number on the window back of me told me that we were two hundred stories above the bottom of this particular street-canyon, I managed to send a feeble message of reassurance through the air to Sark Darlin. He must have caught it instantly, for his answer came back, after I had assured him of our return:

"Thank God!"

I whispered the words myself, reverently, for Lona had stirred in my arms. She was not dead, and I lived again. I unfastened the headpiece of her monopter, so that she might have the fresher air outside; unfastened my own headpiece and placed it close beside me. Lona opened her eyes; her whole body quivered in my arms in a shudder I understood. She was, after all, a woman, and I loved her. She said nothing of our return from above the Atlantic, though she must have known how she had been brought back; but her eyes were eloquent. I had saved her life; more than ever, now, was that life a part of my own. Our lips came together in a kiss which was a delirium of happiness, of which there is all too little in this world of ours.

It was Lona who first recalled the horror we had witnessed.

"Quick, Gerd!" she exclaimed, rising to her feet, wavering so that I held her fast lest she topple from the platform. "Our headpieces immediately! I am all right now. We must get back to Father Sark. He needs us, as all City of the East needs us now!"

I made no reply. None was needed. She had spoken truth. Our headpieces were replaced swiftly and in silence. Still hand in hand we soared aloft from the platform, rising straight upward between the walls of the street-canyon until we had cleared the tallest buildings about us. Then, straight as homing pigeons, we turned our goggled faces toward Executive Building, a vast white needle eastward. Did I fancy it, or had an ominous black cloud suddenly dropped down to hover above the spire of the Building of the Engineers?

I do not know. I do know that as we fled toward Executive Building, through air lanes that now were silent and deserted because of the

catastrophe, a vaster dread than any which had yet been mine was at my throat.

What must be done to combat this monstrous menace that had come to us from the deeps of the ocean? For centuries we had been looking to our Invisible Frontier as protection, and this had been so perfected that nothing had yet been invented which could pass through or over the Wall of the Rays. But we had paid little heed to the ocean. We knew that City of the West, the city of the Aliens, possessed monopters as good as our own. Yet our whole City was surrounded by that Invisible Frontier, save only that side which faced the ocean. We had thought of submarines as obsolete, and our cocksureness was threatening us with disaster. Of course we were not being caught entirely unprepared; for that would have been the height of folly. We had prepared, after a fashion, against attack from the Atlantic by separating City of the East into sections, each of which could be isolated in a second by the man at the keyboard in Sark Darlin's office—so that, were entrance gained to any one section, that section could be shut off from the City at once, and the remainder of the City be as impregnable as before. This had been my reason for sending that message, naming the section, when I had caught my first glimpse of the great submarine. Sark's instant warning had cleared that section of the people who mattered. In fancy I could see them quitting those buildings in their monopters like swift birds that are flushed by the hunter. Some, of course, had been caught; but there had been few, for I had been able to distinguish below us only the nude bodies of the Menials.

Of this I was thinking as we hurtled toward the Executive Building, wondering subconsciously at the black cloud which hid the glistening spire in which was the office of Sark Darlin—wondering at its meaning, and why a vague intuition told me that all was not well.

Nearer and nearer we flew, yet the spire did not appear from the black cloud. That meant we should have to land on some lower platform until the lifting of the cloud. Delay, delay, delay! But we dropped down into the canyon swiftly, along the edge of that ominous cloud, and landed upon the first platform of the Executive Building we could see. And made a ghastly discovery!

There was no spire of the Executive Building! This platform upon which we stood was the highest platform remaining of the needlelike shaft which was the Building of the Engineers! We stood on a platform on the four hundred and ninety-eighth story; there should have been two stories above us. Yet half of story 498, all of story 499, and the glistening white spire which had been the pride of Sark Darlin were gone! All the mass of the building above where we stood had been sheared off as though a great knife had passed cleanly through the building! No debris at all and, as far as we could see, none in the canyon below. The upper portion of Executive Building had vanished! From where we stood we could look into what remained of story 498, where the office appurtenances stood in the open as their fleeing users had left them, no cover above them to protect them from the elements, shadowed by the ominous cloud which, from a distance, I had thought obscured the crest of the Executive Building.

Lona and I still clasped hands. Now her hand gripped mine more tightly, and I returned the pressure. No words were needed. We both knew that Sark Darlin had vanished as mysteriously as his office had vanished, together with all of those high officials who had occupied the

offices that should have remained above where we stood. In one blow, mysteriously delivered, the enemy had shorn City of the East of leadership. Then the realization following on this thought staggered me: *I* was the leader now, with Lona my equal in power! In an instant that responsibility which I had not expected to assume for years to come had settled upon my shoulders—and I must get busy at once.

That ominous cloud was settling. Lona suddenly stepped to the edge of the platform and dropped off into space, pulling me with her. As we fell, plummeting downward, her words whispered into my ears.

"That cloud, Gerd! Whatever took Daddy and the crest of Executive Building is inside that cloud! In another instant City of the East would have been leaderless indeed! We must prepare!"

"WE MUST prepare!" Yet what were we to do? For with the obliterating of Sark Darlin's office had been obliterated that vast mechanism of his by which he had been in communication with all the City. There was now no way to send forth a warning. But Lona knew! Her father had confided in her, more than he had seen fit to confide in me before I had in fact become his son-in-law. Her hand held mine as we continued dropping into the canyon. We struck the bottom as lightly as feathers and, Lona leading, both of us running awkwardly because of the impediment of our monopters, approached a tunnel-like opening in the bottom floor of the Executive Building. This was the closest I had been in all my life to ground level. And we still were going down.

Inside the tunnel we ran, into darkness. We dropped into ebon space and our monopters were automatically in use again. Then we were in the cavernlike immensities of the level of the Menials, and I had set foot on the soil of Earth for the first time in all my days, the first of all my family so to do for generations! But there was no time to think of this now, for Lona was running again, leading me swiftly with her, among the nude people who were the Menials, bowing and bending, toiling and steaming in perspiration, as they labored with the soil to make it bring forth fruit for food. I had no opportunity then to observe what they did, for Lona was leading me to one of those slender piles about which I had been told—one of those piles which support the Great Rampart, which is the floor of City of the East. She opened a door set flush with the surface of the slender piling, and we were in the piling's heart.

"See!" cried Lona. "Sark Darlin, dead though he may be now, was still too far-sighted to be caught as they thought to catch him! Here, in miniature, is a keyboard of communication which is an exact duplicate of that in Father Sark's office—a duplicate whose secret Daddy gave me only yesterday. Gerd Sota, you are now the chief administrator of City of the East! Give your orders!"

I am thankful, looking back upon that moment, that I acted without hesitation. I doffed my headpiece and took my stand before the myriad-faced board of communication—ticked my frenzied message forth into space. It was a message to the nearest station of the Invisible Frontier, and it was a command that a single one of the Invisible Rays be directed into the heart of the black cloud which hovered over Executive Building. When I had finished the message I turned to Lona, feeling a certain pride in my own ability; but Lona was nowhere to be seen! Frightened, I stepped to the door and called her name. But no one answered. The Menials, some of them,

looked dully up from their tasks for a moment; but a sharply snarled oath from me caused their eyes to fall. A member of the upper levels does not allow the Menials to gaze upon his face—it is the law.

Then, from directly above, Lona settled to the earth beside me.

"I went up to Rampart Level," she told me breathlessly, "and I was right about the cloud! I reached the bottom of street-canyon just as the ray was turned upon it. I couldn't see the ray, of course; but I could see the effect, for the cloud vanished in a breath, and tongues of fire filled the air where it had been! Out of the fire fell a single monopter, like no monopter in City of the East, but larger than any three of them, and marked in motley colors, like the costume of an ancient clown! It crashed to the ground quite near where I stood, and three men, mere blackened cinders, so that I could not tell the color of their faces, rolled from it! I ran and looked at them—each one held in his blackened fingers a slender tube. These three tubes, whatever powerful agency they may have contained, were, I am sure, the inventions which wrought such havoc with Executive Building!"

"But, Lona!" I objected. "How could the monopter have got through Invisible Frontier?"

"It didn't come through the Frontier!" she retorted. "I am sure it came from the other way, else one of our people at the Frontier is a traitor, which I'll never believe! That submarine brought it, just as it brought those tiny submarines which caused the breach in the Great Rampart. The big submarine must have emerged far out to sea to discharge the monopter, and the monopter, hiding itself in a cloud of its own making, floated over the city. Some way, which we may never learn, its occupants kept in contact with a common leader inside the submarine, so that the leader was informed of the proper moment to make his attack. Ugh! Imagine it, Gerd Sota! An evil monopter, traveling in its own cloud, high above even Air Lane 50,000, emitting its self-concealing blackness like a giant squid that has left the water suddenly and grown wings! Then, at the proper moment, the attack. God! Beloved! Daddy Sark!"

It had been too much for Lona Darlin. Even as I once more removed her headpiece she swooned in my arms, and I bore her inside the room of the board of communication. With the two monopters, hers and mine, whose material is soft as eiderdown, I prepared her a pallet on the floor. I laid her down, covering her with cloths which I found at hand. Then, knowing that a good rest would be the best thing in the world for her, and that she would waken when nature willed it, burdened only by the natural sorrow caused by the loss of her beloved father—I seated myself before the board of communication and began to send forth my messages.

To Commander of the Air:

Clear the air lanes of all monopters save those which are of the patrol service. Under your personal supervision the skies above the City will be patrolled until orders for your relief are sent you. Do not relinquish vigilance day or night. Am sending orders to the electricians to keep searchlights playing into the skies during the hours of darkness. SOTA.

To Master of Electricians:

Have men posted, in reliefs of one hour, at each aerial searchlight throughout the City. Keep the skies as light as day throughout the night. Report any bodies in the air, clouds or otherwise, which are not the monopters of the aerial patrols. SOTA.

To Department Heads of Invisible Frontier:

Be ready at any moment to raise Invisible Wall along your section of the Frontier. Have extra men posted at each tube, with instructions to turn the rays upon any object in the sky, cloud or

monopter, indicated in orders from me giving location and direction-reading.

SOTA.

To Chief of Interior Administration:

Satisfy yourself that there are no traitors in the corps which has charge of the Invisible Frontier. Report results.

SOTA.

This last I sent in the code always used in communication with City of the East's secret service, a code which Sark Darlin had taught me. I was proud of the fact that I was able to send, in the code, from memory.

These orders sent forth, I connected the phones of my monopter with the receiver of the board of communication and, satisfied that any message would waken me instantly, flung myself down with my head against the beloved feet of Lona, ears attuned to the tympanum of the phones, and slept the sleep of utter exhaustion.

4

IT WAS Lona who wakened me. She had slipped into her monopter again and had mine straightened for use. There was utter silence inside the piling, not even the monotonous humming of the machinery used by the Menials coming through to us. An ominous silence. Yet no message had come over the wires. If anything had happened outside, in City of the East, no warning had reached us. Yet I knew upon waking that something was wrong. So did Lona, for she was as pale as chalk as she faced me in the pale light of the dimmed incandescents which lighted the room inside the piling.

"Look, Gerd!" she ejaculated, pointing at the board of communication.

Then I realized why no alarm had reached me, and cursed myself deeply for having jeopardized City of the East for the sake of a bit of sleep. But the sleeping had saved my life. For I had turned in my sleep and, because my phones were fastened tightly in place, my turning had pulled the connection of the phones with the board of communication. It had saved my life, I repeat, for the board of communication was nothing but a twisted mass of metal. The myriads of wires were fused together in a single ugly mass, and the wood of the board was as black as coal. The board of communication was useless—and I had been asleep. What had happened? None of the officials knew the location of this second board of communication, and they might have been trying for hours to arouse me for the purpose of asking for orders. Anything might have happened because of my negligence.

There was no time to waste. With Lona's hand in mine, since I needed her strength and woman's courage, I stepped out of the room. Lona led the way to the opening in the Great Rampart through which we must rise to first story level. But as we went another and more terrible revelation burst upon me.

Something ghastly had befallen the Menials!

I could only guess how many there were of them; but as far as the eye could reach in all directions, massed against the slender pilings, grouped here and there in all sorts of contorted positions, not a nude figure moved. Sightless eyes gazed straight at the ceiling, glassily staring, while faces were contorted into masks of horror unimaginable. One man, a brown one, had clasped his hands at his own throat, and the grip still held in death, so powerful that the tongue, swollen and discolored, protruded from between teeth which glistened like snarling fangs. Another man lay doubled in such a way that his face was almost against his own nude loins, and the veins on his neck stood out like cords. Dead Menials, by scores and hundreds, slain swiftly before they could at-

tempt escape, stricken down in the positions in which the unknown agent of death had found them.

What had slain the Menials, and why had they been slain?

The reason was obvious—the Menials, who did the work of City of the East, had been slain in order that not a wheel of commerce should turn throughout all the city—and the agency which had destroyed them had been created for the very purpose it had served—and the Menials had perished.

But how?

It came in a flash, then. The Menials were nude, and only the nude had perished. Horror-stricken, I bent and examined one of the laborers.

Weird, unknown rays! That was the answer—rays which acted only upon nude flesh! For just below the breast-bone of each contorted corpse, indelibly etched in the flesh, was a brownish circle perhaps two inches in diameter—much like the light circle a small flashlight makes upon an opaque object when held close to that object. The flesh inside the circle was burned to a crisp. Turning one corpse over I found a similar circle on the back, bisected by the spinal column! The ray had pierced the nude body!

I shuddered with horror. Those little submarines! The breach in the Rampart, and men, countless men, from City of the West passing among the Menials with those gruesome little flashlights in their hands.

Lona and I had escaped because they had not found us! Now I understood the silence, and why the machinery of the Menials was motionless. That machinery is, or was, operated by electricity, and such of it as I could see as we hurried through the contorted forms in the direction of the opening upon First Floor Level, had suffered the fate of the board of communication. Twisted metal, wood black as cinders, useless junk. In all the level of the Menials was a chaos of twisted wires, fused and odorous, twisted and contorted human bodies, a vast mausoleum which made me understand something of the ruthless power of the agency we were combating, and something of the horror we might yet expect. What would we find in the upper levels? Had, while we slept, the same mysterious agency which had slain the Menials made a holocaust of City of the East? It was unthinkable.

But there was no time to lose. It takes time to tell, but scarce two minutes could have elapsed after my wakening before Lona and I once more stood at the first story level.

City of the East was as light as day and the catastrophe which had fallen upon the Menials had thrown all City of the East into turmoil! Great searchlights played across the heavens, their diverging rays crossing and recrossing, their varied colors creating a kaleidoscope more brightly tinted than the greatest rainbow. Imagine the wonder of it! A City of a million spires and turrets, of a million buildings whose crests were in the clouds; buildings which formed a City of the East whose boundaries were the Mississippi on the west, the Atlantic on the east, and the regions of cold and heat to the north and south; a City divided into sections, each of which comprized no more than two square city blocks, each of which was part of a still larger section which was, roughly, five miles square—and each of the lesser sections equipped with powerful searchlights. Uncountable searchlights, of a myriad of colored beams, each playing across its allotted portion of the midnight sky.

City of the East, vast and immeasurable in the human mind, was the abode of terror unutterable, for

attack had been delivered from an unexpected quarter and countless lives had been lost. I looked upward at the flight after flight of the aerial patrols, close-mustered specks in the sky at Air Lane 50,000, and the lights from the searchlights gilded their monopters eerily, so that they seemed like monster moths, with sunlight glinting on their wings. Swift darting moths, patrolling all the sky.

Lona and I turned westward, speeding at the ultimate limit of our monopters for the Invisible Frontier. This could easily be seen now, for where the lights from the darting searchlight-wedges encountered the Invisible Frontier the beams broke short off, so that the Wall, invisible as I knew it to be, was indicated by a night-black mass, through which even the beams of the searchlights could not penetrate. Even light disintegrated and refused to penetrate the Wall of the Rays.

Though we looked as far as we could in both directions, the black wall seemed endless, and we flew for several miles parallel to it to satisfy ourselves that there was no breach. An eery experience, if you will, for we could not see the apparatus which directed the rays. Just an ebon wall against the West, as though it had been the edge of the absolute darkness of outer space—and silence. Satisfied that there was no breach along the Invisible Frontier, Lona and I turned back toward the Atlantic and, since Air Lane 40,000 was deserted, we flew with the speed of the hurricane.

From this height we could see little of City of the East, so far below us, for our eyes were blinded by the glare of the myriad of lights which blazoned the heavens through which we sped. Through yellow light now; now through blue; now through pale green, we fled into the East. I was now in communication with the commander of the air. Two black clouds, he told me, had been dispersed at his orders when he had been unable to communicate with us; two black clouds which had apparently hung motionless at least ten thousand feet above Air Lane 50,000. He had ordered the nearest of the ray stations of the Invisible Frontier to disperse these clouds, which had been done instantly—and out of each had fallen a single huge monopter (huge, that is, in comparison with our own monopters), to plummet downward into the heart of City of the East.

I had an idea whence the clouds came.

"Am heading out over the Atlantic," I wirelessed the commander. "Keep your wave-length adjusted for contact. Lona Darlin is with me. Obey orders sent by either of us. Keep a sharp lookout on the Invisible Frontier. If the searchlights penetrate it at any point let me know at once."

Then I severed connections and Lona and I hurtled onward into the East.

For the second time in twenty-four hours we could see, dimly it is true, and then only with the aid of powerful night glasses, the outline of the Great Rampart. We could not see it until we had left the shoreline several miles behind, because of the searchlights; but when it did become visible I began to get some idea of the terrible thing that we faced. Before, mountainous waves of water had crashed against the Great Rampart along a distance of little more than five miles, a local storm artificially induced, in some way, by the big submarine. Now a storm so vast in comparison as to dwarf that other into insignificance crashed against the Great Rampart. The roar was so vast that its very volume caused Lona and me, holding hands to keep from being separated, to be tossed to and fro like chips in a mill-race. No

threat of destruction to a mere five miles of Rampart this time, for the storm was visible to right and left as far as we could see.

It might have extended along the whole length of the Great Rampart, as I believed, and later verified, that it did. But outward from the coastline a mere ten miles the ocean was as untroubled as a pond—and for an excellent reason!

Side by side, each in contact with its neighbor to right and left, submarines, only less vast than the first we had seen, pointed their steel noses at the Great Rampart! No beams as from searchlights came from their decks, and I knew that Lona and I had not been seen—yet. This was a terrible danger into which I was taking her. Had I tried to send her back she would not have understood my reason for so doing; besides which I wished her with me, even though both of us lost our lives.

Submarines afloat, abreast, their noses pointed at the Great Rampart. An attack was imminent; but how would it be delivered? It would be useless to charge the Great Rampart, even with metal monsters as vast as these. What, then?

I was soon to know. As before we had seen the tiny submarines dart back from the artifically created maelstrom before the Great Rampart, we saw them drop back again; but multiplied in numbers by the number of the big submarines which had lined up offshore to begin the offensive.

Here is where I made the mistake which was to prove the ruin of City of the East, for I sent a message to the commander of the air to clear the City immediately of all inhabitants, ordering them to the unmapped ways above Air Lane 50,000. I knew the monopters could do it, under pressure, though it would be a terrible strain on the nervous systems of the flyers, and many must, of necessity, fall by the wayside. Sacrifice the weak that the strong might live—it seemed sensible reasoning to me, in view of its stark necessity.

Looking back, after receiving the acknowledgment of the commander of the air, I saw the monopters rising from City of the East in veritable clouds. Not until the space below Air Lane 50,000 had become empty of aught save the beams of the mighty searchlights, whose operators were left behind at their posts—and I knew that the inhabitants who were able had been herded into the spaces above Air Lane 50,000, did I realize how neatly I had been tricked. The commander, then, of this barrier of big submarines had known all the time that Lona and I were above them; but had been subtle in his reasoning beyond imagining. It proved he had known of our presence that other time, too, when the one big submarine had wrought such havoc with the Great Rampart. From my actions then he had reasoned out my own probable line of reasoning, and I had done exactly what he had figured that I would do.

For no explosion occurred; no new breach showed in the Great Rampart. The commander of the invaders had worked a ruse the like of which had never before been encountered in the annals of modern warfare—and I had fallen into the trap. How well I knew it when the next episode occurred!

From the giant submarine directly below where Lona and I hung in the air, watching, shot a great funnel of blinding light. A funnel, or inverted cone, with its apex at the point of departure, broadening as it lifted to our place in the sky, so that the light was all about us. But it was different from the lights which the City of the East used, for we could see through the sides of the cone, around which we circled like moths in a mighty lamp chimney, unable to get through

because of *something* inherent in the strange light which dashed us back when we would have gone through, dashed us back as effectually as a stone wall would have done, holding us prisoners inside the gleaming cone.

But we could see—great God, we could see! And in the hour or so before the end I realized to the full the catastrophe my lack of reasoning, my lack of experience with the minds of men, had brought upon City of the East! I understand now the reason of that hint I had caught in the voice of Sark Darlin when he had told me I must become worthy to be the leader in affairs of City of the East. I had failed and, moving about the sides of the cone, seeking a way out, I suffered such torments as no man before me has ever suffered and, I hope, as no man may ever suffer in the future—for I could see!

As though at a signal the undersea hatches of the countless submarines opened and were flung back and, as the bees must have come forth when Pandora opened the box, came forth in swarms and myriads the monopters of the invaders! Now I realized, too, where even Sark Darlin had been shortsighted. He had never known of these submarines of the people of the West, feeling, no doubt, that the Invisible Frontier made it unnecessary for him to send spies and secret agents into the country of the Aliens. He had taken it for granted that City of the East was far in advance of the Aliens in point of inventions and the paraphernalia of warfare—a great mistake. We had not needed to make war, and were caught unprepared; the Aliens had been preparing for war for generations, building their monopters and submarines on the west coast, so far away that not even a whisper of warning had reached us. Then, when everything was ready for the greatest offensive in history, the long voyage down the coast in the fleet after fleet of metal amphibians, the unbelievable *walk* across the narrow neck of the Isthmus, the plunge into the Atlantic, and the lining up of the monsters before the Great Rampart of City of the East.

But my own mistake had been far greater. Yet, after all, what could I have done? I am sure they would have beaten us in any case, and our people would have worked out their lives in slavery instead of meeting the merciful death which was their portion because of my mistake. Yet I feel that I shall go into eternity with oceans and oceans of blood upon my soul. I *might* have done something.

But it was too late now. I knew it when, watching from the cone, desiring above all things to lose the power to watch because of the frightfulness, I saw those myriads of monopters swarm from the hatches of the metal monsters and advance upon City of the East by thousands. But stay! There was still the Invisible Frontier. I could communicate with the department heads of the Invisible Frontier and tell them to turn their rays across the top of the City. For, foreseeing the time when this very move might become necessary, Sark Darlin had caused ray reflectors to be erected on certain lines above the City so that the rays might be bent to follow the curvature of the earth, leaping the gaps between the lines of reflectors with the mathematical nicety which only a genius like Sark could have managed. It would be better to ruin the buildings, for they could be built up again, than for those huge monopters to swarm up in a surprize attack against our people, all of them now in the highest air lane and above. If I hurried I could have an invisible barrier built up between our people and the up-

(Continued on page 708)

THE WOLF

BY SEWELL PEASLEE WRIGHT

"Through the leaping flames the monster sprang for him."

FROM across the lake, clearly and with eery distinctness through the stillness of the night, came the fearsome notes of a hungry timber wolf trailing some straining, panting deer.

Startled, I leaned forward, my pipe cold between my teeth, and listened to the hellish music of that tawny demon of the woods.

The eager, savage hunting cry changed suddenly to a demoniac pæan of victory, broke into a slavering yapping—and then the pulsing silence settled down on us once more.

"Got her!" I said, giving voice involuntarily to my thoughts.

George nodded gravely.

"The timbers seldom miss making their kill," he remarked thoughtfully. "It's no wonder the people of olden times used to believe——"

"*Hello the camp!*" The ringing, unexpected hail from the dark lake caused us both to start like frightened children. The weird hunting cry of a timber wolf does things to the nerves of even the men who spend all their days in the bush.

Our visitors proved to be two in number: the first a tall chap in the uniform of the Provincial Police, who introduced himself as Tieg McDonald, and a tall, slender man with a professional beard and black, restless eyes, whom McDonald introduced as Dr. Saunders.

It was instantly evident from their attitudes that the doctor was McDonald's prisoner, but aside from the

fact that the doctor carried no weapons of any kind, there was nothing tangible to indicate the fact.

Dr. Saunders was in a pitifully nervous state; his eyes roving constantly, searching the surrounding blackness with an intense and never-resting gaze that bordered on the insane glare of a madman. When he spoke, his voice was jerky and high-pitched, and although his remarks were utterly rational, it was easy to see that he was near the breaking point. McDonald kept a cautious eye on his prisoner at all times, but I somehow caught the impression that there was more of pity than sternness in his regard.

For some time we chatted quite casually, and then I dropped a remark that proved to be a bomb-shell.

"The timbers are ranging south early this year," I said. "I suppose you heard that big boy——"

"God!" groaned the doctor in the voice of a damned soul. "Will I never get away from the voice of those hellish beasts?"

"That's all right, Doc," said the big policeman soothingly. "There's three of us here to see that no wolf comes around the camp." Then McDonald turned to us. "Doc had a mighty bad experience up on Tennelip Bay," he exclaimed. "Ran up against a mad wolf——"

"No!" cried the doctor, his wild eyes searching our faces. "No! It was not a mad wolf. It was not, I tell you! Listen, and I will tell you myself all that happened. "We were——"

"It'll get you all nerved up to tell the story again, Doc," interrupted McDonald. "Better turn in and get some sleep, eh?"

"No. I want to tell these men also, and see what they think," returned the doctor stubbornly. "You think I am mad, McDonald; I am not blind, you know."

The policeman colored a little under his bronze, but he simply shrugged his mighty shoulders and said nothing.

"It was this way," began Dr. Saunders, as calmly as though he were about to relate the most commonplace event. "I came up into the woods on a long hunting trip, seeking not so much a trophy as my health. My practise had worn me down in body and mind, and I knew from experience that a month or so up here in the bush would make another man of me.

"I made the decision to come, and left that same night, trusting to chance to find an outfitter and a guide after I got to the jumping-off place. There had been a lot of hunters this year, however, and the only guide I could find was a French-Indian breed known only as Victor. He had not been long in the country, and I gathered that he was pretty generally hated and mistrusted, but he had trapped last year in the very country I wished to hunt in, and so I took him.

"He was surly, silent, and at times almost savage, but had a most uncanny knack of finding his way in the bush, and of locating game. I saw him discover game on several occasions when it seemed that only the power of scent could have served him. Once or twice, upon awaking late at night, I found him missing from the tent, and always the following mornings he was more sullen and morose than ever. However, I am silent by nature myself, and my guide's disposition, while it caused me some wonderment, gave me no concern whatever. Most of these men of the bush are odd characters.

"One night we were sitting around our fire just as we are sitting here now. It was very dark, without even a star showing through the heavy clouds overhead. I had become weary of my own thoughts, and gave

the brooding Victor a verbal poke to see if I could not rouse him.

"'I heard old man Martin, down at the post, giving some of the fellows the very devil for telling stories of werewolves in this country,' I remarked casually. I knew very well that Victor would be possessed of all the superstitions of his breed, and that old Martin and Victor were bitter personal enemies, but I was utterly unprepared for the sudden hatred that flared up in Victor's eyes.

"Across the fire I saw my guide's deep-set eyes light up with sudden hatred.

"'Ol' Martin, he ees a fool! He ees crack'; he ees a child the secon' time! Who is he to laugh at better men, I ask you?'

"'Then you think there are werewolves in this country?' I asked, amused (God help me!) at the sudden ferocity of the man.

"'How can one know for sure?' shrugged Victor. 'My own people, the French'—he was about one thirty-second French, the rest being several breeds of Indian—'they say for sure that there be werewolves. I have met men who have seen them. Where there ees so much sign, there must be game. Ees eet not so, *M'sieu?*' He smiled ingratiatingly, revealing flashing white teeth beneath his stiff and bristling mustache.

"I sent a cloud of tobacco smoke swirling through the chill night air, and watched it merge with the hurrying wreaths from the fire.

"'Bosh!' I rejoined, more for the purpose of seeing what he would say than for any great interest in the matter under discussion. 'Werewolves have long since been proven nothing but myths, Victor. Only ignorant people believe in such things these days.'

"I was surprized at the effect of my words. Victor's dark eyes lit up with a peculiar flickering light such as I had never before seen except in animals; the kind of weird, green glint you see in the eyes of a dog or a cat at night. His eyes narrowed until they were scarcely more than evil slits, and his thin, red lips drew away from his gleaming teeth until his face was utterly bestial in its expression of demoniac, insane hatred.

"'*M'sieu* thinks so?' he asked, and his voice was low and silky, like the purring of a cat or the soft guttural notes of a fawning dog. 'Well, *M'sieu* should know. He ees educate', and I am but a poor French bushman.' And he stalked off into the darkness toward the tent.

"I started to apologize, as I had not meant to offend the man, but he was gone. Oh well, I thought, let him turn in and sulk if he wanted to! I would finish my pipe anyway before following him. I leaned back comfortably against a big tree and, watching the weaving tongues of yellow and red, lost myself in revery.

"My thoughts drifted into many channels; almost I was dozing, when suddenly, sharp and clear as the note of a bugle on a winter morning, the hunting cry of a wolf shivered through the night silence. Once, twice, three times the eery, hellish call cut through the air; something maniacal, something threatening, something exultant, something pleading in the long, undulating notes. Despite myself I shivered, and drew closer to the glowing coals.

"'Hear the wolf, Victor?' I called to my guide, to break the uncanny silence that followed the challenge of the wolf.

"There was no answer.

"'Victor!' I cried sharply, suddenly apprehensive. Only palpitant silence answered me.

"I scrambled to my feet and ran to the tent. It was empty! Victor had disappeared.

"Suddenly the banshee wailing of the wolf again splintered the deathly stillness. It was nearer now, much

nearer. It came racing down a long slope, then ran up back of the camp, evidently headed directly toward me.

"HASTILY I piled dry wood on the dying fire. The fresh fuel smoldered a moment and then little tongues of eager flame began licking through. All the time the demoniac bugling of the wolf was becoming louder, fiercer; was drawing ever nearer. Was the animal crazy? What little breeze there was was blowing directly toward him, and surely he must have scented the camp. And where had Victor gone while I napped? And *why* had he gone? Had he deserted me, as Indian guides not infrequently do?

"These and a hundred other questions flitted through my mind as I fed the fire and fanned it eagerly until it blazed. No wild animal, I knew, would come close to a fire. Carefully I piled the pitchy wood, and in a minute or two the flames were leaping high into the overhanging darkness, spilling red light like blood over the rocky ground, and setting a thousand shadows springing and dancing like ghoulish imps.

"The threatening, savage cry of the foraging wolf stopped suddenly, and a hushed, expectant silence settled down over the woods. Even the lap-lapping of the water on the shore a few yards away seemed to die to an inaudible murmur.

"'Old boy changed his mind!' I chuckled. 'Fire is the one thing——'

"There was a soft rustle in the bushes just behind me. I gave a startled exclamation and turned sharply in my tracks. There, not two yards away, a pair of blazing green eyes were watching me narrowly. Even as I turned they came slowly, unwinkingly nearer.

"I jumped for my rifle. It was leaning against a tree on the other side of the fire; I remembered putting it there, where I would be sure to see and clean it before I turned in. I knew just where it was —and yet when I reached for it, it was gone. Frantically, thinking it might have fallen down, I looked around for it. It was not there. And across from me, on the other side of the fire, a huge, tawny timber wolf stalked into the circle of fire and stood with its malevolent green eyes fixed unwinkingly upon me.

"The brute was larger than any timber wolf I had ever seen or heard of, and much darker in color. The lips were curled in a hellish caricature of a smile, and a low snarl came from its slavering mouth. For one long moment I eyed the brute and it eyed me back. And then, suddenly, through the leaping flames and the showering sparks, the monster sprang for me!

"Instinctively I crouched, protecting my throat. The movement was the only thing that saved me, for the long white fangs sank into the fleshy part of my upflung forearm. Desperately I threw myself upon the writhing beast, my hands seeking his throat. Useless, useless! The beast unloosed his hold on my arm and reached for my throat. I leaped backward as quickly as I could, and the shining, cruel teeth clicked savagely together not an inch from their mark.

"Snarling with rage, the animal sprang again, but as he did so a sudden thought struck me, and I cursed explosively. Why hadn't I thought of my revolver before? Hastily I snatched it from its holster under my arm, and as the wolf flung at my throat I fired.

"The result was instantaneous. A look of fear blazed suddenly in the smoky green eyes, and the beast seemed to stop its leap in midair. Before I could fire a second time, the wolf had disappeared into the shadows of the surrounding forest.

"It was limping badly, its left hind leg being apparently badly hurt, and in the firelight I saw several drops of blood gleaming blackly on the rocks at my feet.

"I MADE no effort to follow the animal. I was exhausted with my terrible struggle, and my brain was throbbing dizzily with excitement. I am no hero, and that great beast, bigger than any wolf and with a light of hellish intelligence burning in its eyes, had chilled the very blood of me. Weakly, with a little trembling sigh of relief, I seated myself beside the fire.

"A moment later I started apprehensively. Something was coming through the bush! Was it——? A familiar voice hailed me from the darkness. It was Victor!

"Smiling, his teeth gleaming whitely under his black mustache, Victor came up to the fire.

"'*M'sieu* is awake, eh?' he remarked. 'I have been out hunting for a wolf that I hear while *M'sieu* sleeps. I am so bold as to take the gun, but *sacré!* Of the wolf I do not even catch sight. Shrewd ones, those wolves, *M'sieu!*' He was smiling amiably, but as his glance met mine, I would have sworn there was something mocking in the depths of his dark eyes, and for an instant it seemed that they gleamed with smoky green fire.

"'I saw him,' I remarked shortly. 'He attacked me.'

"'So!' exclaimed Victor in surprize. 'The wolf, he attack you, here by the fire? Eet ees imposs'!'

"'Impossible or not, he did just that,' I declared. 'I shot and wounded him or he would have torn my throat out. Only hit him in the leg, but that was enough.'

"'And tomorrow we will be back in town! Eet ees too bad you have not the time to stay so we could hunt heem!' said Victor, a peculiar note in his voice. 'Even though you do laugh at the werewolves of my fathers, you would like to shoot a timber wolf, ees eet not so?'

"Again the smoky green light seemed to flicker in his eyes. A thousand tumultuous, impossible thoughts swirled through my brain. The smile on Victor's face seemed to turn to a menacing grin, like the snarling visage of a wolf . . . with gleaming white fangs . . . slavering jaws——

"Some instinct caused me to look down. Victor followed the direction of my glance with a smile half of fear, half of hatred.

"*His left leg, from the knee down, was covered with blood!*

"'It was in the left leg that I shot the wolf,' I said musingly, almost unaware that I was thinking aloud.

"'And eet ees the left leg that I hurt when I fell in the dark!' smiled Victor. 'Eet ees what you call a coo-incident, ees eet not, *M'sieu?* Something eet ees hard to believe?' And he chuckled mockingly, triumphantly.

"My overwrought nerves gave way then. I felt something snap out of place up here"—the doctor indicated his head with a vague gesture—"and a dizzy, light-headed feeling swept over me.

"I remember seeing Victor as through a bloody fog, across the fire, but his face had changed to the face of a wolf—the wolf that had leaped through the flames, straight for my throat.

"I think I shouted something as I drew my revolver and fired at that leering caricature of a human face. I am a good shot, and I did not miss, for Victor crumpled in his tracks."

The doctor paused for a moment and stared moodily into the fire.

"I do not remember just what happened after that," he resumed after a few minutes, during which none of

us broke the oddly strained silence. "I left Victor where he fell, I think, and paddled to one of the fishing camps on the lake. Mr. McDonald happened to be there, and he consented to take me back with him. I guess, gentlemen, that is all my story. Do you think I am mad, as Mr. McDonald does, I am sure, or do you think that I know what I saw?"

With a pitiful eagerness he glanced from one face to another.

George was the first to speak.

"I think, Doctor, that you have had a most unusual experience," he said thoughtfully. "And I think Shakespeare was indeed right in saying that there are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in the philosophy of most of us."

I nodded. "That is undoubtedly so, Doctor," was the only remark I could think of, although I knew in my heart, of course, that the doctor was a madman.

It was not until after the doctor had retired that I learned the rest of the story. It was McDonald who threw the last light on the strange tale the doctor had told.

"The funny thing about it," remarked McDonald as we were smoking a last pipe around the fire, "is that when I went back to the doctor's camp, Victor had two bullet holes in his body; one through the leg and one through the head, and the one through the leg was tightly bandaged with a blood-soaked handkerchief—and to the wound were sticking a number of black and yellow hairs—wolf hairs!"

George said nothing, and I said nothing. There are lots of things in the woods of the far north that man is foolish to attempt to explain.

An Old House

By CRISTEL HASTINGS

Bathed in mystery and moonlight,
  Wistfully it stands
At the end of a lonely, winding road
  Where cobwebs hang in strands
Of dusty lace an old ghost hung
  Before a sagging door—
And winds go moaning through the rooms
  With fog from down the moor.

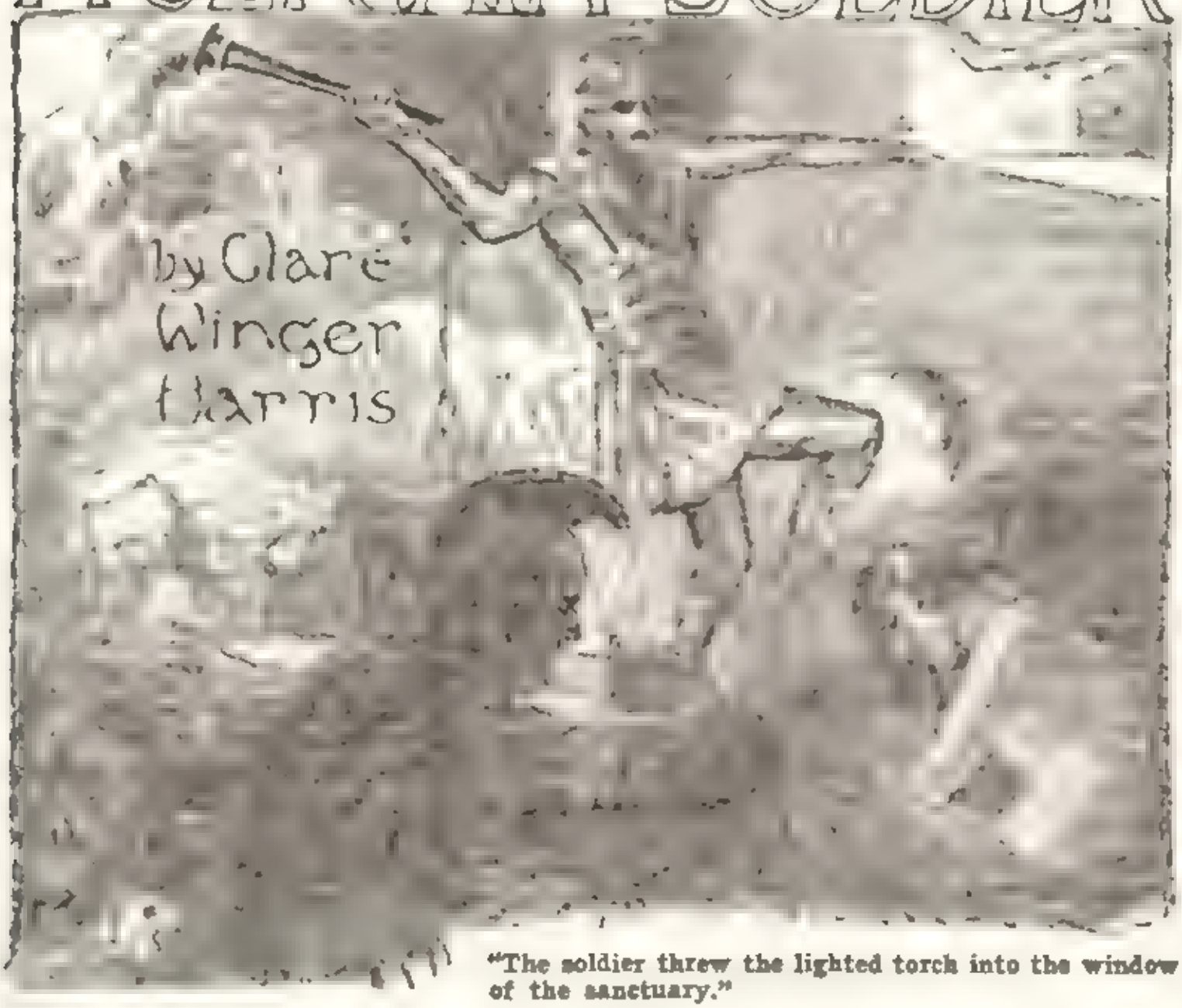
Never a light—nor sound, nor laugh—
  Never a footfall—wait!
What was that?—did I hear a step
  Down by the creaking gate?
Echoes resounding in empty halls—
  Shadows that spring like cats—
Sudden drafts that seem like breaths,
  And a fluttering of bats.

Eery tenants—ghosts of old—
  Loves and griefs—and tears—
Underneath a leaking roof
  Haunting mildewed years.
Straggling roses climb the porches
  Hiding broken panes,
Though their roots be dry and fainting
  Waiting for the rains.

Bathed in silent, moonlit fragrance,
  I hear the old ghosts talk—
Must be wind in that old maple
  Down the lonely walk.
Bats, and broken, paneless windows—
  Creaking shutters—weeds—
Loneliness and sobbing wind ghosts,
  Wait for the friend it needs.

A CERTAIN SOLDIER

by Clare Winger Harris



"The soldier threw the lighted torch into the window of the sanctuary."

I MET Lee Clayton in Rome. The attraction was a mutual one, for we discovered that we had much in common; both students of history, fond of travel, and possessing an insatiable thirst for the uncovering of forgotten and apparently insignificant historical data that might throw light upon questions of dispute.

At the end of three weeks we had covered the city of the seven hills from the Flaminian to the Appian Way, reveling especially in those relics that gave us any knowledge of the dead past. Dead? Can the past ever really die? I believed, and I think my friend Clayton agreed with me, that the past lives today. It is immortal, but in its changed form it is manifest in influence and posterity. These two in a stream of continuity render the antiquity of Rome a vital fact in the Twentieth Century A. D.

One warm evening Clayton and I returned to the hotel veranda after an interesting day among the ruins of the Roman Forum. To our ears came the characteristic sounds of Italian life; a snatch of song in melodious tenor, a sharp staccato exclamation, the rumble of cab wheels over cobblestones, and the occasional

bleating of goats whose milk supplied the native quarter. To our right the yellow thread of the Tiber was faintly visible.

Clayton smiled understandingly and waved a hand toward the streets below as he sank luxuriously into a comfortable chair.

"Great thing for a rest, Ebson," he remarked. "It's a change from the hurry and bustle of the average American city. I like it."

"Yes," I agreed, "and a change always means rest. Although we are both young we've been living strenuously in a modern business world, and can't help appreciating the contrast."

We sat for some time in silence, the while I noticed Clayton's features displaying a growing pensive mood. His former joviality was disappearing. I made no attempt to encourage conversation, for I felt that it would come when the time was ripe.

"Friend Ebson," said Lee Clayton at length, dropping his listless mien and leaning toward me, "for many years the repetition of a certain dream has troubled me. The vision first appeared when I was in high school and followed me throughout my entire college career, its vividness increasing with the passing of the years. It pertains to the solution of the mystery surrounding the ambiguous expression in the Greek, Latin and Jewish scripts where the incendiary of the temple of Jerusalem is invariably referred to as 'a certain soldier'. In my constantly recurring dream I seem continually on the verge of discovering the identity of this 'certain soldier', but always I awake just before solving the mystery. My trip upon this occasion to the Eternal City is to find out, if possible, who threw the flaming torch into the temple at Jerusalem when the legions of Titus took the city of the Jews. If it is ever possible to bring my haunting dream to a consummation it should be here amid the relics of its original enactment."

I must have gazed at him incredulously, for he continued hastily. "In all sincerity I mean what I say, my friend. Either here or in Jerusalem I should be able to ascertain the identity of that 'certain soldier' who threw a lighted torch into a window of the sanctuary. Why, man alive, think of the responsibility of that act!"

Had the heat of a semi-tropic sun or the fatigue of daily sight-seeing affected my friend's mind? I hesitated before voicing a mild rebuke, and in that moment of pause the spirit of adventure, tempered with tolerance for the incomprehensible whims of another, possessed me. My answer must have surprized him.

"There's a quest worthy of some time and effort!" I answered with more enthusiasm than I really felt. "The Forum Romanum has already disclosed to us a few of its secrets, and why not this one? We'll show the world yet that Tacitus and Josephus and a few others of the ancients didn't get exactly the right dope on all this."

My light mood did not affect Clayton. He continued seriously, his eyes showing a dreamy expression.

"You must remember the historians, Josephus and Tacitus, were both contemporaries of Titus—and —and this 'certain soldier'. They had first-hand evidence and certainly ought to have been more explicit in their details. As a matter of fact," he added, "they are more evasive in their narrations of the events connected with the siege of Jerusalem, of which they must have been eye-witnesses, than they are regarding historical occurrences preceding their era."

"Yes, that is strange," I agreed. "How do you account for it?"

Clayton was about to reply when I noticed that a pallor spread over his features and he leaned forward with eyes intent upon the hotel entrance. Following the direction of his gaze I saw the well-tailored back of a gentleman disappearing through the doorway. I turned with a glance of inquiry to my friend. His manner showed agitation, and I did not press him for the explanation, which I knew would be forthcoming shortly.

"That man," Clayton explained in a husky voice, "is an enemy—and possibly not without reason," he added reflectively. "Two years ago I was fortunate enough to win as my wife the girl whom we both loved. Shortly afterward the company in which we were both financially interested elected me to the presidency, a position to which each of us had aspired. Since that time my dear wife died—but the business concern in which that man and I are mutually interested is prospering. Although my two victories have been won solely by fair means, the man whom you saw disappearing within the doorway has proved a determined enemy whose obsession is to avenge his defeat in love and war."

I was a little disquieted, though I sought to cover my uneasiness with cheering words.

"Never mind, old chap. We are living in the Twentieth Century. No one can stoop to revenge in these days and get away with it. Now if we were living in 70 A. D., for instance, you might have cause for alarm. Life was held pretty cheap at the time Titus laid siege to Jerusalem, and one had to live warily, but things are different now."

He smiled wanly. "Speaking of Titus, let's begin tomorrow to solve the mystery of the 'certain soldier'."

"Agreed!" I replied heartily. "I'm in my element when it comes to finding an explanation for the inexplicable."

2

SLEEP seemed to have forsaken me completely that night. The full moon shining in at my window caused me to abandon all further thought of rest. I arose, dressed myself and stood gazing out across the silvery landscape. The moonlight softened objects below that in the glare of day stood out in too bold relief.

I stood for some time in a troubled and hesitant mood.

"Why not?" I exclaimed, half aloud.

Once resolved upon my course of action I sought the streets below without eliciting any surprize from the sleepy concierge at the desk. The streets were silent and deserted, the pavement echoing with the ring of my footfall until it seemed to me that all Rome must be apprized of my nocturnal sally. Soon I spied the ancient grandeur of the Colosseum as it rose tier on tier above the stone ruins and cypress trees that nestled in its shadow. I was approaching the familiar territory of the once busy mart of ancient Rome. The Arch of Constantine rose before me, sublime in its architectural beauty. Then I turned fascinated eyes down to the ruins of the Forum, which lie several feet below the level of the present city.

I know it was surprize, though not untinged with fear, that possessed me as I became aware of the presence of another figure not fifty feet ahead of me. It was that of a man, and he was agilely descending the steps to the lower level. I instantly recognized Lee Clayton and watched him with fascinated gaze. What could the man be doing alone among silent ruins in the dead of the night? Then I thought of myself and my own intentions and I nearly laughed aloud. Well, I would not spy on my friend! I quickened my pace with the intention of making my presence

known, when further progress was arrested by the changed demeanor of Lee Clayton.

No longer did he walk as a man alone, but rather as one who wends his way in and out among a crowd. Occasionally he paused and gazed fixedly at some object apparently visible to him, then his head turned as though following the course of something in motion.

The effect was most uncanny, and I pinched myself to make certain I was not asleep. The somnambulist, if he were such, strode with dignity in the direction of the triumphal Arch of Titus, and there he paused. Strange words were wafted to my ears, phrases in an unknown tongue. Unknown? Had I studied Latin for six years not to recognize it when I heard it, even in this fashion? Occasionally Clayton paused, apparently to lay his hand upon the shoulder of an invisible associate. Some of the things he thought he heard were mirth-provoking, and his laughter rang out weirdly shrill in the white silence around us.

"Jumping Jehosophat!" I exclaimed, wiping my perspiring brow with my handkerchief. "That's a wow of a dream all right!"

He must have heard me, for he looked in my direction and smiled as if in friendly greeting. Tremblingly I smiled back. I racked my brain for one intelligent sentence in Latin.

"'All Gaul is divided into three parts' won't do upon this occasion," I mumbled disconsolately.

The only other words that came to my muddled brain were the Latin version of 'Twinkle, twinkle little star.' I tried them and was greeted with a burst of uproarious laughter from Clayton, the incongruity of which at this time caused me to tremble with fear. He said something about *vinum nimium*, and then turned his attention to the Arch of Titus, talking off and on the while as if engaged in conversation with many around him.

For an hour the apparent monologue continued while I stood spellbound. Finally he turned abruptly and proceeded in the direction of the Colosseum. He strode so rapidly that I had difficulty in keeping a desirable distance behind him. I intended to see that he returned without harm to his rooms at the hotel.

At the foot of the flight of steps leading to the level of present-day Rome, Clayton paused and passed a hand across his brow. He gazed about him in apparent bewilderment and proceeded thereafter with the air of a man in solitude.

Thinking that possibly the knowledge of a witness might cause him some embarrassment I did not make my presence manifest, but allowed him to retire to his apartment before entering the hotel myself.

Was the true explanation of Lee Clayton's night expedition in any way connected with the puzzling dream of which he had told me? Sleep claimed me for the few hours that remained until dawn.

3

The following morning found me in bed at a late hour. My vigilance of the previous night had been more fatiguing than I had at the time realized. I lay for some time pondering the enigma of my friend's behavior. Should I feign ignorance of the occurrence in the Forum, or would it be best to inform Lee Clayton of what I knew? Unable to decide the better course to pursue, I dressed and hastened down to breakfast.

Clayton was breakfasting alone in a far corner of the dining salon. As I took the chair opposite him he looked up with a smile of recognition and passed across the table to me an open volume which he had been

perusing, pointing to a paragraph therein.

"Hebrew!" I ejaculated. "I'm sorry, but I don't know a word of it."

"Then here is a rather free translation of it," he replied, "but I regret that you can not read the original. Some of the author's thought is always lost in the process of translation."

I accepted the proffered script and read the following:

"The secret of the identity of a certain soldier who fired the sanctuary of the holy temple of the Jews lies buried in his bosom. An associate, upon threat of exposure, bids him make record of his deed. This he has done, but so obscurely that nearly twenty centuries shall pass before the mystery shall be made clear."

"Well, that's beginning to get close," I commented, returning the paper to Lee. "Who was the old fellow that wrote that?" indicating the volume.

"That is not known," Lee Clayton replied, turning to the title-page. "It seems to be merely a collection of anonymous Hebrew manuscripts published by a German house in the early part of the Sixteenth Century."

"But why all the secrecy?" I asked. "The 'certain soldier' was merely fulfilling destiny when he obeyed an impulse to fire the sanctuary."

Young Lee Clayton shot me a swift, searching glance.

"If you believe so," he said quietly, "I will not gainsay it, but if you want my personal opinion, the 'certain soldier' was, as indeed all of us are, the captain of his own soul. He was entirely responsible for his deed. You know Shakespeare wrote,

"'The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars,
But in ourselves, that we are underlings.'"

"What if he did?" I admitted, warming to the argument. "But if I remember rightly he is also responsible for these words:

"'There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
Rough-hew them how we will.'

"How do you reconcile the two?"

Clayton laughed pleasantly. "It seems to be a case of 'pay your money and take your choice,' friend Ebson, and my choice is made and is unchangeable."

"I admire you for your convictions," I said heartily. "I confess my own are not so unshakable."

He smiled a little pensively, then remarked, "And because I believe this 'certain soldier' to have been entirely responsible for his act of desecration, I wish to ascertain his identity. And now I am going to a curio-shop which I chanced upon yesterday. Will you come too?"

I readily consented, and together we wended our way through the busy streets of modern Rome.

Not far from the Piazza de Spania, near the end of a short and narrow street lined with native bazaars and stalls, is a curio-shop of one Antonio Salvucci, dealer in antiques. Although the place was far from cleanly and had a very cluttered appearance, it was not wholly lacking in charm. The proprietor appeared from the rear of the shop as we entered and eyed us appraisingly.

"The American gentlemen wish some Roman antiques?" questioned the Italian eagerly.

"Just looking, Mr. Salvucci," replied Clayton, and aside to me: "The museums have most of the genuine antiques, but occasionally one can pick up something good for very little money."

We walked about the little store looking at and inquiring about various objects. Most of the curios were relics of Coptic art that had been found in and about the catacombs

where the early Christians had met secretly to escape persecution. Occasionally an object that dated back to the Republic was seen, but the majority were identified in some way with the period of Rome's downfall when attacked by the tribes from the north.

"Have you any relic of the time of Vespasian or Titus?" asked Clayton, coming at last to the subject that was nearest his heart.

"Titus—Titus," repeated the foreigner as if trying to recall some long-forgotten fact. "Wait, I see."

He vanished through a rear door, but reappeared some minutes later bearing in his arms a miniature restoration of the famous Arch of Titus which had been erected in honor of the Roman conquest of Jerusalem in 70 A. D. This facsimile was two feet at its greatest length, and the other dimensions were proportional.

We were delighted with our find, but feigned indifference. I perceived, though, that it was all Lee could do to keep his hands off it.

"What price do you ask?" I inquired casually.

"Twenty-five dollar," answered the Italian promptly.

"Nothing doing," I replied, turning toward the door, "I'll give you five for it."

"Oh,—but, *signor*, I have four *bambini*. I must make a living," he pleaded with characteristic Italian pathos.

"I'll give you ten," said Clayton somewhat harshly.

The sale was eventually consummated at the sixteen-dollar figure, and we bore our trophy away with exultation.

Back in the hotel and safely ensconced in Lee Clayton's rooms we studied the little arch minutely. It was a very perfect reproduction in Pentelic marble like the original, and showed a faithfulness to detail that was nothing short of marvelous.

There were the faces in bas-relief of Titus the son of the emperor Vespasian, a number of triumphant Roman warriors, a line of Jews in bondage, and a reproduction of the seven golden candlesticks which had been seized from the Holy of Holies when the temple at Jerusalem was plundered. The chiseling of the faces was unique, each one displaying its characteristic individuality.

"Do you notice," I observed, "that the sculptor has differentiated between the Jews and the Romans? The facial characteristics of each race are quite in evidence."

"Yes—only—hold on a minute, Ebson!" cried Lee in excitement. "He's made one error. Unless I'm very much mistaken he's got a Jew among the victorious Romans!"

"To be sure!" I exclaimed, my excitement equaling his own. "That figure near the middle certainly belongs to the conquered race. But there were Jews who were Roman citizens," I added; "and the chances are they were even more numerous in 70 than in 40 A. D."

"That is very true," Lee answered a little abstractedly, I thought, "but it is very poor taste for the artist to be so realistic in a symbolic creation where comparatively few figures are represented. I think he showed decidedly bad judgment—unless," he added, "the Jew in question was a man of considerable importance."

"That explanation sounds plausible to me," I said. "The torchbearer is undoubtedly a man of fame whose portrait is indispensable to an accurate depiction of the triumphal entry into Rome."

4

NIGHT and a full moon shedding its ethereal light across the eternal city prove a combination irresistible to lovers of beauty and romance.

Lee Clayton and I left the hotel at sundown and wandered on the Roman Campagna amid the venerable quietude of its ilex and cypress trees. The beauty and serenity of the scene were not likely to be soon forgotten. When the moon hung low we returned to the city seeking that part which is rich in historic associations. We saw plashing fountains, old altars, partly demolished statues of ancient origin, picturesque arches and shattered pillars, their outlines softened and half concealed by flowers and vines.

After the moon had disappeared we retraced our steps to the hotel. I had just locked my door preparatory to retiring for the night when I was forcibly impressed with a possible solution to the enigma of the Roman soldier who was a Jew! I unlocked my door, locking it again behind me, and stepped into the hall. There was light in Lee's room and the door was slightly ajar. I rapped lightly but received no response. Upon the center table stood the small replica of the famous arch, and it seemed to me as I gazed ruefully at it that the handsome features of the mysterious Roman Jew regarded me with amusement not untouched with contempt.

I left the room and descended to the first floor.

"Did Mr. Clayton leave the hotel?" I inquired of the desk-clerk.

"He passed this way just a moment ago," the man replied.

My mind was made up. Without a moment's hesitation I left the hotel and stepped into the quiet of a semi-tropic night. For an instant my eyes, unaccustomed to the darkness, saw nothing, but gradually, as objects became faintly visible, I discerned the figure of my friend as I had seen him upon the previous night, striding rapidly toward the site of the Forum of ancient Rome.

But his pace was too rapid for me, and I knew that unless I dashed madly after him, running the risk of arousing suspicion, I could not hope to catch up with him. Instinctively I retraced the route of the night before. In a breathless condition I espied the familiar ruins of the great Colosseum and the arch of the first Christian emperor, Constantine, flanking the mammoth pit of the ancient Forum wherein clustered pillars, like tombstones of a bygone age, gleamed palely.

Fatigued to the point of exhaustion I seated myself on a boulder and mopped my perspiring brow. The night seemed to be growing warmer—and a faint glow of suffused light pervaded the landscape.

"But the moon set an hour ago," I murmured in bewilderment.

Then I stared with gaping mouth and bulging eyes. The Arch of Constantine was growing hazy and transparent while I gazed. I turned to the Colosseum and saw that the familiar sloping sides where Time had put its stamp of demolition were fast fading away and in their stead the outline of the vast arena became more distinct in its pristine splendor.

"Merciful heaven—am I going mad?" I exclaimed, passing a hand across my eyes in perplexity.

When I looked again for the Arch of Constantine, it was gone! Something seemed to snap in my brain, and then——

5

"By the Gods, Pliny, you are missing the fun. Our new emperor, Titus, is marching with the legions through the triumphal arch which is just completed. His route is through the Forum, as it was nine years ago upon his return from Jerusalem while his father, Vespasian, yet wore the purple."

I looked up from the rock upon which I was seated to see a familiar face regarding me affectionately.

"I shouldn't want to miss that, Quintilian," I replied in the fluent Latin in which he had addressed me.

I cast a hurried glance at my attire, thinking how incongruous a figure I must appear in a suit of the Twentieth Century. But my alarm was short-lived, for I perceived that a spotless toga draped my body in graceful folds.

My companion plucked my sleeve, and I arose and turned toward the Forum.

"See," exclaimed Quintilian, "the soldiers are already passing the Temple of Vesta. Hurry!"

Stretching before me beneath an azure sky lay the busy Roman market-place of the First Century, its pure marble fanes and statues reflecting the brilliance of a mid-afternoon sun. Throngs of white-robed people intermingled with young men in military accouterments who were scattered singly and in groups about the great mart.

My sensation was a most peculiar one. While I recognized my identity as Paul Ebson, of Cleveland, Ohio, at the same time I was cognizant that as I stood here with my good friend Quintilian, the famous rhetorician, I was Pliny the Elder, noted naturalist of Rome.

We forced our way through the crowd and stood before a statue of two figures, symbolic of the conquest of Judea by Rome; as beautiful a piece of statuary as I had ever seen, comparable to the works of the most noted Greek sculptors rather than to this decadent period of Roman art. Alas that the Twentieth Century had never seen even a remnant of this masterpiece of sculptural art!

I was about to comment upon this creation when the cheers of the populace directed my attention to the approaching procession, at the head of which, mounted upon a richly caparisoned steed, rode young Titus, emperor of Rome. He was followed by a body-guard of stalwart men. Following this came a cohort of Roman soldiers, and immediately behind, long lines of captive Jews, eight abreast, their heads bowed to the yokes of the conquerors. Then followed the legions of Rome, their spears and shields clattering rhythmically as they marched toward the great triumphal Arch of Titus.

A youth of eighteen years came up to my side and greeted me with a friendly salutation. He was my nephew, Pliny the Younger, who shared with me the joys of scientific research.

"Uncle," he cried, his eyes sparkling with excitement, "I wish I had been old enough to have gone with the legions of Titus to Jerusalem like Flavius over there; but see, they have passed through the arch and some of the soldiers are rejoining the rest of us. Look, here comes Tacitus. Isn't he handsome?"

I looked at the stalwart young soldier who was nearing our group. Yes, it was Tacitus, who, though young, was establishing for himself quite a reputation as an historian.

"Tacitus—Tacitus," I repeated under my breath, but I knew that the youthful historian and soldier was Lee Clayton.

Tacitus regarded me with an enigmatical smile.

"Is your ire still aroused, Pliny, that the portrait of my fellow historian appears upon the arch and mine does not?" he asked. Then he added, "You must remember that his years number more than mine and that his reputation in the chosen profession of both of us is already established."

"I know that, my dear Tacitus," I replied, "but I am convinced that

your narratives adhere more strictly to historical facts than do those of your Jewish rival, and what is more, I don't like a man who can take part in the overthrow of his own people."

Tacitus smiled. "I don't believe the possibility of my becoming his professional rival is worrying Josephus so much as the fact that the fair Julia has consented to become my wife. You know he sought her hand after the death of his Jewish wife, Vashti. His failure in love has embittered him. We have been doing a little work jointly in preparing an accurate chronicle of the siege of Jerusalem. I asked him if he knew who threw the lighted torch into the window of the sanctuary of the temple, as I thought the act of sufficient importance to warrant minute detail in narration, but he was evasive upon the subject, finally remarking that the expression 'a certain soldier' was sufficient information to hand down to posterity; that the deed and not the doer was in this case of paramount importance."

"Well, Tacitus," I said, "I admire your love of truth and detail and I will do what I can to assist in procuring for you the identity of this 'certain soldier'."

6

Our little group of four moved slowly toward the Arch of Titus while around us surged the Roman populace. As we walked we were greeted by friends on this side and that. At length we stood facing the great arch through which the legions of Titus had but recently filed. How familiar it looked! And there in the foreground, sculptured among surrounding notables of pure Roman blood, was the face of Josephus with the same expression of mockery.

I tore my attention from the arch to the scene in the Forum. The crowds were thinning as the shadows lengthened. I became aware of another presence, and turning I encountered the ironic gaze of the historian Josephus. I recognized him to be a man of extraordinary intellect. His lofty brow and thoughtful eyes indicated that. Still there was something about the man I did not like and I was forced to confess to myself that the feeling was inexplicable.

"Well met, Pliny," Josephus said in salutation. "I hear you leave on the morrow for Pompeii. Give my regards to Lucius Sulla and tell him that I will myself be in Pompeii by the ides of next month. And here is my fellow historian Tacitus," he continued, smiling upon the younger man with a patronizing air. "How goes the account of the siege?"

"I am still wanting to put a name in the place of 'a certain soldier'," Tacitus replied. "Future generations will not tolerate ambiguity."

Josephus shrugged his shoulders and pointed with a smile toward the portrait upon the arch. "Quite an honor for an insignificant soldier, don't you think, my friends?"

"I am of the opinion that your part in the siege may not have been as insignificant as you would like to have us believe," I said.

"What do you mean?" Josephus demanded, his brow clouding.

I did not reply at once, for Quintilian was excusing himself to go to his home. Pliny the Younger was off for the new Colosseum, which had been but recently completed.

When they were out of hearing, Josephus repeated his question with glowering mien, then recalling suddenly the presence of Tacitus, controlled his anger with effort. I knew that he would vouchsafe no information in the presence of his rival historian.

I shot a significant glance into the eyes of my dear friend Tacitus, and remarked casually, "By the way, Tacitus, is it not the fair Julia's daily custom to ride in the vicinity of the Colosseum toward sundown in the chariot of her father, Agricola?"

"You have spoken truly, Pliny. I am to meet her at the hour of sundown by the Golden House of Nero," the young man replied.

"I will say farewell, Tacitus," I called after him, "for I may not see you again until my return from Pompeii."

The latter's reference to Julia did not improve the temper of the Jewish historian, who turned to me with a third repetition of his question.

"I will ask you, Josephus," I replied quietly, "why the portrait of 'a certain soldier' who ignites the sanctuary of his own besieged people is not important enough to appear on a triumphal arch. But there is one objection, his name should appear in the written chronicle."

The historian trembled with mingled fear and rage and his voice was thick as he answered, "Do you dare to identify me with that accursed 'certain soldier'?"

I looked sternly at the wretched man through narrowed eyes and said, "Josephus, if you will write a confession of your deed you will find favor with the Gods, and posterity will hold your records in good repute."

"And what if I have already revealed in writing the name of the soldier who was moved by a divine impulse to throw a lighted torch into the window of the sanctuary?" he asked mockingly.

"Divine impulse!" I exclaimed. "Would you consider it a divine impulse were I suddenly to seize a bar and demolish the sculptural figure of yonder smirking Jew who aids in the overthrow of his people?"

His apparent terror wrung my heart.

"But your confession," I urged in gentler tones. "Where is the written chronicle you mentioned in which 'a certain soldier' is named?"

"In my bosom the secret lies, Pliny, and there it shall stay—yes, it shall be unrevealed till twenty centuries have rolled by. Historians are sometimes permitted glimpses of the future as well as of the past!"

I lunged toward him, but he fled, his prophetic words ringing in my ears. I stood alone in the Roman Forum before the Arch of Titus, gazing at the smug countenance of the sculptured Josephus that seemed gloating over the secret within its breast.

Within its breast!

"By all the immortal Gods," I cried, "I understand the words of Josephus, 'In my bosom the secret lies'."

Impetuously I picked up a blunt bar that lay on the ground a few feet away, and cast a hurried glance around me. From behind the Temple of Jupiter Stator a figure was approaching. I recognized it as that of Tacitus returning from his ride with Julia. I lifted the bar for a shattering stroke that did not fall.

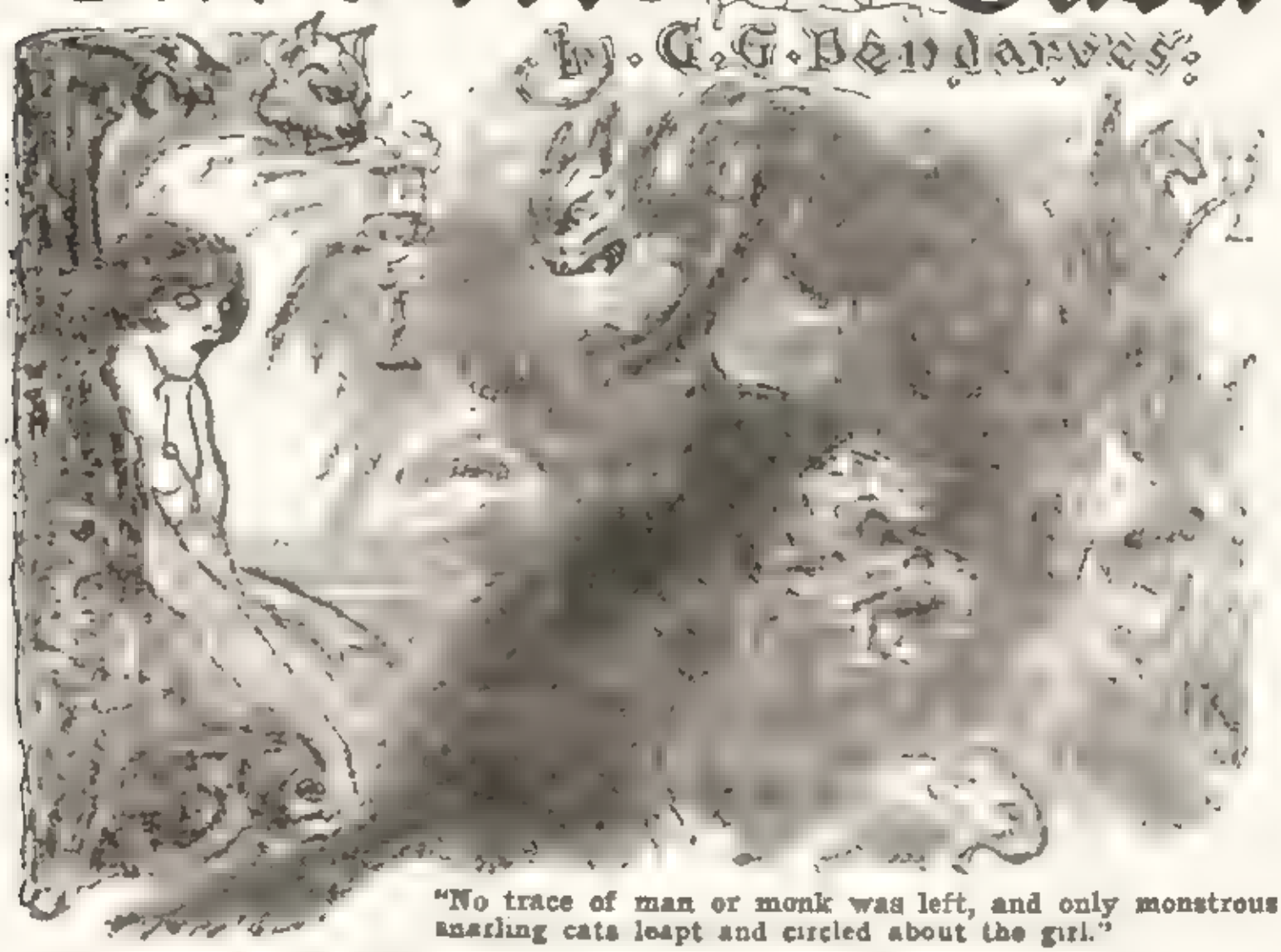
The beautiful arch was aging before my eyes. Corners were becoming worn away, inscriptions grew faint, and in some instances were completely obliterated. Weeds and the creepers of vines clambered over the surface, and many of the chiseled features were chipped or worn smooth by the fingers of Time. The face of Josephus was gone completely. For all posterity might know, a typically Roman visage could have topped those shoulders.

I stood aghast, but with undiminished ardor commenced to knock away the marble folds that covered the breast of Josephus. Then I felt

(Continued on page 716)

The Lord of the Tarn

By C. G. Bendawes



"No trace of man or monk was left, and only monstrous snarling cats leapt and circled about the girl."

[*Miles Warriner to his godfather, Sir Donald Fremling.*]

The Green Palace Cinema,
Liverpool, Sept. 30.

DEAR PATER:—

It's tremendously decent of you to offer to go up to Cumberland and see Coral yourself. This cellist, Torkel Yarl, who drifted into the Hydro after I left, sounds a dangerous sort of bounder, and I'm not only jealous but really afraid for Coral.

It's so foreign to her nature to make sudden friendships with anyone—she's as shy as a blue-jay—and that's why this violent intimacy alarms me.

She is wrought up to a fever-pitch of excitement over Yarl and his music, and seems to spend the whole day working with him. Our orchestra broke up when the summer season was over at Brackenfells Hydro, but both Coral and myself are booked for the Xmas season there. I took a temporary job of playing first violin at this cinema because the pay was so tempting, and means marrying Coral six months earlier.

She stayed on at Brackenfells at a nominal salary to entertain any stray visitors that might drift in, and to rest before the Xmas rush begins . . . They're tuning up, and the big drum I am using as a table is wanted. So am I.

Do go as soon as possible.

Your very worried

MILES.

[*Coral Deane to Miles Warriner*]

Brackenfells Hydro,
Oct. 7.

DEAR MILES:—

What soul-searching questions you ask! I can't answer them now because I have so much to tell you about the music I have been doing.

Torkel Yarl is marvelous! Even the great Casals seems to fade into a mere amateur beside him! It's not only his playing—he improvises superbly, too; it quite frightens me sometimes, for I can't understand how any man *can* do what he does!

He plays from memory everything you and I have ever done. Not only cello solos, but arrangements of big orchestral things as well. The Lalo Concerto, Boellmann's Variations, Saint-Saens' Allegro and Chopin's Polonaise in C are a few examples of his repertory!

Do you remember the Mendelssohn Fugue in E flat for strings? He produced a piano part for me in script and he does the rest! Don't ask me how—it is quite beyond me! His genius is so great that it is almost terrible. Particularly in his own compositions. They are more like the wildest sort of Slav music than anything else I have heard, but far more barbaric! I always dread playing his own works, though I don't know why I do!

Torkel says I have a certain amount of genius, but am too sentimental to use it properly. I was furious when he said this, but he only laughed, and then took up his bow and played so divinely that I forgot to be angry any more.

Of course I love you and miss you, Miles! Why do you ask me so often? I went up to the Red Tarn on Monk's Rock last week—that place has an extraordinary attraction for me now. I got a nasty deep scratch on my arm when I was by the tarn which won't heal up. I can't remember how I did it though.

With love,
Yours,
CORAL.

P. S. Did I tell you Torkel has a finger missing on his left hand? I can't imagine how he does the stretches.

[*Sir Donald Fremling to Miles Warriner.*]

Brackenfells Hydro,
Oct. 15.

MY DEAR BOY:—

As I have often told you, it gives me the greatest happiness whenever you turn to me for help. Your pride and independence make it difficult for me, now that you are no longer a schoolboy.

You have been quite frank with me about Coral, and I will be equally frank with you—chiefly because you must be prepared to play the hardest part in the awful little drama which Torkel Yarl has staged. Your part is to wait and do nothing! No matter how desperate the crisis, you can not help—only hinder.

Torkel Yarl is not a man as you and I understand the word! He is not a human being—but superhuman, literally *super*human.

Physically he has all the characteristics of his Danish forefathers (his name—Yarl or Eorl—gives you the clue to his ancestry, of course). He is powerfully built and tall in proportion, and moves with the ease and grace of a panther. His eyes add to this illusion, they are unnaturally bright and gleam under drooped eyelids in a horribly compelling fashion.

As to his music—it is a weapon of such supreme power that it would rouse the dead to follow him over the edge of the world!

Why am I not under his spell, you ask? Ah, because years ago I learnt what Power inspires such as Torkel Yarl—and behind those gleaming

eyes of his I see his devil seated, lustful and mocking.

The missing finger on his hand is a distinguishing mark which may help, when it comes to the final proving of my theories.

Don't forget to be cautious in your references to me when you write to Coral. She has no idea who I am.

Your affectionate godfather,
DONALD FREMLING.

[*Coral Deane to Miles Warriner.*]

Brackenfells Hydro,
Oct. 30.

DEAREST MILES:—

You always warned me not to let my dreams blot out reality too far, and I seem to have done it! I have wandered out into space, and when I want to return I find there is no room!

You bring me back always—but I know that soon even the memory of your love will not draw me. I shall just go on and on—and never return! Will that be death, Miles? But that's absurd, of course—I am perfectly well.

I have changed my mind again about our wedding; if you still want me, I will marry you when you come back at Xmas. I hope Coral Warriner will be better worth your loving than Coral Deane—but I am afraid you are taking a risk, dear!

Don't you think it is curious that I have grown to love the Red Tarn so much? Do you remember the first time we saw it together, one late autumn day last year? What a desolate, wind-swept place it seemed then—the water of the tarn cold and gleaming under the gray sky—the tall yellow reeds rustling and shivering on its banks! I was never so afraid of any place out in the open before. Do you remember what a coward I was, and how I thought I saw figures crouching and stealing about among the stunted trees and patches of gorse?

And yet I love the tarn now more than any other spot in Teordale. Torkel has written music about it for me, called *The Voice of the Tarn.* It is the wildest music in the world and the sweetest—in B flat minor, my favorite key!

The theme steals in like a ghost wandering lost and lonely by the tarn. The four winds carry its lament until it swells to longing and despair, in great, crashing chords that make me tremble. The modulations are very abrupt—breathless swoops from one height to another—and it finishes with a wild burst of gayety in a major key, like mocking laughter high above the tarn.

The curious thing is that I can never recall a single phrase of the music unless I am on the Monk's Rock. The instant I set foot on the ascent from the valley I hear vague murmurs which get clearer as I climb up. Sometimes I am dizzy and bewildered by the rushing harmonies that greet me as the deep waters of the tarn come into sight. It is almost more than I can bear to hear. Once I must have fainted—for I discovered later the deep scratch on my arm of which I told you, and I can't remember doing it! It still won't heal up!

One of the guests at the Hydro is a Mr. Donald. He has traveled all over the world and we have long talks together. I was telling him about you just before I began this letter. He seemed to bring you much nearer to me.

That's why I can write and tell you how much I love you, Miles, in spite of my queerness—never believe that you are not the only one that really counts in the whole world to me!

Good-bye, Miles darling! The tarn would be mysteriously beautiful by moonlight—I must see it!

Your
CORAL.

[*Miles Warriner to Sir Donald Fremling.*]

27 Avon Sq., Liverpool,
Nov. 6.

I'M LIVING in a perfect hell of doubt and fear, Pater! Coral has just sent me a letter which brings her back to me, as she used to be before this infernal Yarl started in! But two things in it worry me horribly.

First—what is the matter with her arm?—why won't the scratch heal up? Is it blood-poisoning on top of all the rest?

And has she told you about wanting to see the Red Tarn at night? For heaven's sake don't let her do that! At night the shadows would make the path impossible—it's more or less dangerous even in the daylight. I am appalled at the idea!

It's slow torture—this waiting business. Why can't I come and do the devil out once and for all? I'd rather be hanged for it than let Coral go on like this from day to day. MILES.

P. S. Don't curse me for worrying you! I know you can't do more! But this is plain unadulterated hell!

[*Telegram. Fremling to Warriner.*]

Teordale, Cumberland.

JUST sent latest report by express. It explains much. If you see Coral now you destroy her only chance. Wait.

[*Sir Donald Fremling to Miles Warriner.*]

Brackenfells,
Nov. 7.

MY DEAR BOY:—

You can not realize at a distance, in spite of my daily letters, how things are going; and I am afraid you find my methods slow and dangerous, when Yarl is using every hour! So am I, however . . . but Yarl must be allowed to show himself in his true colors before I can act.

The scratch on Coral's arm might be described in a rather dramatic way as a "devil mark." Yarl has evidently made an attempt to get her when she went to the Red Tarn on one of her solitary walks. He failed because his hour is not yet come. It will heal when Yarl ceases to exist, and not until then. It is not dangerous in itself—simply a brand!

If it were of any use to kill this man outright, I should not hesitate to do so; but if he were sent out of life now, he would return in another human form—and with added power and malevolence!

For your comfort I can tell you plainly that there is an hour, and a place, where I can come to grips with the devil that dwells in him; and for that hour I am waiting!

Now read the enclosed account of the early history of Cumberland and you will understand whence Torkel Yarl derives his power.

I must go back to the year 936 A. D. when Hywel Dda, a prince of South Wales, made a law for the protection of cats; with the result that the *chazza* (the old High German name for cat) was brought over in increasing quantities from the Baltic shores, and became domesticated in our island. New and terrible superstitions sprang up—the old Egyptian worship of cats was revived in crude revolting forms by our barbaric ancestors; and the *chazza* was the center and excuse for a thousand nameless obscenities.

This cat worship lingered in remote parts of the country—and as late as the Twelfth Century there are traces of it in a few of the so-called religious houses of those days.

One such abbey, given over to Satanism and every evil practise, was built here in Teordale by the Red Tarn, which served as a fish-pond for the monks—and was known as the Tarn of Chazz (or Chazza).

This abbey was built by a Danish

Earl of Cumberland, the Lord of Chazz, who was immensely wealthy and powerful, and dominated the place to such an extent that its real spiritual head, Father David, was sacrificed at one of the abominable orgies for which the abbey was renowned.

This roused the countryside, and an organized attack was made under Father Ambrosius (the chronicler of the event) which surprized the monks in the very act of their demon worship.

Father Ambrosius leaves much unsaid, and refers briefly and with pious horror to monstrous cats speaking with the voices of men and women, blasphemous prayers to Lucifer, wild hell-games played round the stately cloisters, shameful litanies recited in the abbey chapel, and the celebration of the Black Mass at the high altar—once dedicated to the Glory of God!

Father Ambrosius and his devoted band of followers burnt the abbey to the ground; and the smoke and flame of it lit the whole of Cumberland, according to the chronicler. The cats or monks or both, they slew by the sword—for against their blades, dipped in holy water, the power of Satan was useless. They flung the bodies into the Tarn of Chazz, until the black pond was red with blood, and it has been known as the Red Tarn ever since.

But the fiercest and most devilish of all that monstrous crew escaped! He fled spitting and snarling before the good father's sword—and, leaping off the face of Monk's Rock, vanished into the darkness of the night!

My belief is that this was the ruler of that infamous abbey—the Lord of Chazz—and that he lives still—*in the person of Torkel Yarl!* He is sustained by the power of those he serves, and in return for their protection, he sacrifices a victim at certain intervals!

The last Friday of this month is the Night of Sacrifice—and I need hardly add that Coral is the destined victim!

Do not be led by blind love—or fear—into coming to interfere with my plans. It would be entirely fatal to Coral.

Your affectionate godfather,
DONALD FREMLING.

[*Coral Deane to Miles Warriner.*]

Brackenfells,
Nov. 21.

DEAR MILES:—

Your last letter was a rather queer one, I thought. And you hardly mentioned all the new music I am studying—aren't you interested?

Torkel has promised to give me the Ms. of *The Voice of the Tarn* on condition that I take him up to see the Red Tarn itself. We are going on Friday and I can think of nothing else! Torkel wants to see it by moonlight—and as the moon is full tomorrow night, it ought to be a marvelous sight.

Think of it, Miles! . . . that strange, shadowy tarn with its fringe of reeds all silvered in the moonlight and the water gleaming white and silent! I can hardly breathe as the thought of it burns in my mind!

What did you mean about my promise to marry you at Xmas? I have never mentioned it to you that I remember! CORAL.

[*Miles Warriner to Coral Deane.*]

27 Avon Sq., Liverpool,
Nov. 23.

MY DEAR!

How stupid of me not to have said how deeply interested in your new musical efforts I am. I never could write a decent letter—so I am not surprized at your reproaches.

However, you'll have to use your imagination to fill up the blanks, and remember that I'm working hard in a cold, uninteresting, dirty city, and missing you every hour of the day! The heat of the theater makes me more dull-witted than usual, too. But don't think that I am ever indifferent to anything that interests you.

I'm glad you've made friends with Mr. Donald—your walks and talks with him ought to be a soothing contrast with the excitement of all your musical studies.

The theater music here is deadly stuff! Jazz, punctuated by Rachmaninoff's C Sharp Minor Prelude when the hero fights a duel, or crosses the rapids, or crawls from a blazing house with the heroine in his arms!

My violin sings very low now. You spoilt me entirely for an ordinary pianist, my bad little Coral! I was down for a solo last night—and upon my word that accompanist was as near sudden death as she will ever be!

Think of me sometimes, my little girl. It's pretty lonely here. Good-night, my Elfin Queen! Don't go off with the moon fairies if you meet them on the crags. I want you whenever you are ready to come to me! I hope that will be soon

Your friend and lover,
MILES.

[*Miles Warriner to Sir Donald Fremling.*]

Liverpool,
Nov. 23.

I'M A fool . . . forgive me, Pater! Coral's last letter proved how right you are. I took three hours to answer it! It's awful to think of the risk you are taking for us—I am horribly anxious!

You'll know all about Coral and Yarl going to the tarn on Friday night—she is almost delirious about it!

Your repentant and devoted
MILES.

[*Coral Deane to Miles Warriner.*[

Brackenfells,
Nov. 27.

MILES! . . . It's come at last . . . the lovely silver night! I wanted to write to say good-bye to you—I don't feel as if I should see you again.

I sit in my bedroom writing this, waiting until the full moon rises over the top of Monk's Rock. The great crag stands out, black and splendid against the sky, and lights flicker to and fro across it!

I can hear the music of the Red Tarn floating down to me from that distant height. That magic music! It is calling to me . . . and I must follow . . . follow!

The moon is up—I see the golden rim above the dark ridge at last . . . the music calls more clearly now!

Good-bye, Miles! I am devinely happy!
CORAL.

[*The Vicar of Teordale to the Bishop of Carlisle (extract)*]

The Vicarage,
Nov. 30.

. . . Sir Donald Fremling and I reached the summit of Monk's Rock early in the evening. As the moon rose and the shadows deepened, the wide moorland grew more and more sinister.

It was a terrible vigil! I saw the reeds bend under the foot of some half-visible passer-by, and heard the whispering voice of evil at my elbow and echoes of high squealing laughter. And from the ghyll close by, the biting wind shrieked and tore its way—adding its fury to the terror of the night.

"The Hour and the Power,"

quoted Fremling in my ears, as he pointed across the waving grasses. I gasped as the fresh horror dawned slowly before us.

There, only a few hundred yards or so away, a huge bulk began to blot out the sky and stars. Walls rose and were roofed over. Courtyards and cobbled garths covered the windy heath. Gable and turret, tower and cloister all built themselves before our very eyes—until at last a stately abbey stood complete in every detail—its weather-vane gleaming in the moonlight, and every window brilliant with the lights within.

"The stage is set," replied Sir Donald, in answer to the clutch of my fingers on his arm. "It remains now for the Lord of Chazz to arrive and summon his guests to the revelries."

I must confess, my lord, that my faith burnt very dim in that hour of waiting. Had it not been for the unshaken courage of my companion, I should have fled from the unhallowed place and left my small part in the drama unplayed.

Suddenly I heard a laugh—a happy little sound which made the obscene mirth, echoing about me on the wind, more terrible by its contrast. I knew it was the girl Coral Deane, and Torkel Yarl, approaching the tarn at last.

In a few minutes they neared the tarn and stood in the strong moonlight, not far from the hollow where we lay hidden.

The girl stood silent and enchanted—her delicate lovely face lit with a white fire of ecstasy—her hair streamed back in the wind like a halo of light—and her clear eyes were those of one who watches the gates of heaven opening to let her in!

I was ashamed of my own fears as I saw her there, so unaware and innocent, and on the brink of such nameless horror; and I longed to dash that grinning devil by her side into the dark bubbling water of the tarn.

Suddenly Yarl stepped forward and gave a great ringing cry, which echoed and re-echoed, until I thought every hill in Cumberland had caught and thrown back that infernal summons.

As it died, the tarn rose in leaping waves, flecking the reeds which fringed it with blood-red foam.

The girl's face lost its rapt dreaming look and she stared in horror at the tarn—for from its depths emerged an evil face and head, followed by the body of a man in a brown habit girdled with rope. He scrambled out of the water and up the bank—and at his heels followed a long procession, every one of which was more brutish and ugly than his fellow.

They were the monks of Monk's Rock come to make merry in their old haunt once more!

Yarl waved them on toward the abbey—and at his gesture the girl turned her stricken face and appeared to see for the first time the great illuminated building towering against the sky. She gave a long, incredulous look and turned to Yarl with a little cry. Then as she saw him truly at last . . . a devil—mocking, lustful, and triumphant, she covered her face and sank to the ground.

He laughed loudly at her terror, and picking her up in his great arms, strode on toward the abbey—the mad, shouting crew of monks at his heels.

When the last capering figure had disappeared under the arch of the central door, Fremling and I followed and gained the abbey by a small door at the east end. We crept into the chapel and stood behind the high altar, hidden by a massive screen.

The reek of incense filled the place, and the flare of torches lit monstrous presentments of heathen gods and devils, on walls and pillars.

Abruptly the main door was flung open—and to a burst of wild music, the monks came trooping in. Behind them followed Yarl—leading the girl with mock courtesy by the hand. She looked like a white flower in this fiend's abode; and swayed, half blind with terror.

Yarl led her to a great throne at the foot of the altar steps. The poor child sat, her hands clutching the skulls which formed the arms of her black throne, and her wide blank gaze followed each monk in turn, as he knelt at her feet, and with horrid jest and leer made homage to her.

Then they filled priceless jeweled goblets with foaming liquor, and crowded about Yarl and Coral as she shrank back in her place. Lifting their goblets high they shouted: —"Hail! Hail, Chazza, Eorl of Cumberland! Lord of Life and Death! We drink to your Queen and our Feast tonight! Hail, Lord of Chazz! Hail!"

They drank deep—and as that magic draft worked in his veins, every monk changed his human form, until at last no trace of man or monk was left—and only monstrous snarling cats leapt and circled about Yarl and the girl.

Then I heard Yarl laugh, and saw him touch the girl on the arm—and a long scratch on it began to bleed.

Yarl laughed again and all the beasts with him.

Instantly Fremling withdrew by the door we had entered—and I came out of my hiding-place and stood at the high altar, and lifted the sacred host above my head. A great silence fell—the squalling brutes were dumb—and I called loudly to Coral to come to me . . . I called her in the name of God and that holy thing I held!

She stood up swaying, and looked from Yarl to me—and back again. Yarl tried to hold her, but his power failed, and his arm dropped to his side.

Again I called—and then, with a child's cry of terror and appeal, she stumbled down the steps of that hateful throne and fell at my feet. I stooped and held her, while Yarl stood speechless, glaring at me, and his devils crouched as if turned to stone!

Then, warned by some sound, Yarl turned to see Sir Donald Fremling standing behind him—a short dagger in his hand.

In a flash Yarl stooped and lifted a flagon to his lips; and in a moment crouched transformed and beastlike before his enemy.

Then the lights of the abbey chapel faded—the walls melted into thin air—and I found myself standing with Coral on the bleak moorland by the tarn, whose deep waters foamed blood-red over the bodies of monks as they sank beneath its waves.

I caught a glimpse again of Fremling struggling on the ground with his loathsome antagonist—and the spitting, hissing sound of the fight rose above the wind's shrill cry. Then I saw man and beast roll off the edge of the Ridge of Monk's Rock, and disappear into the depths below! . . .

[*Extract from the Cumberland Comet newspaper.*]

MONK'S ROCK in Teordale, Cumberland, has been the stage for as strange an incident as has occurred in recent times. The Vicar of Teordale made the ascent to the Red Tarn last Friday evening, together with two members of the Brackenfells

Hydro orchestra—Miss Coral Deane and Mr. Torkel Yarl; and lastly, Sir Donald Fremling, the world-renowed mystic and savant.

The latter appears to have had a fight of unprecedented horror with a wild cat, which met the party on the summit of the rock.

Sir Donald Fremling was carrying a dagger (a remarkable occurrence in itself). He killed the beast, but in the death struggle they both rolled off the fell-side, and were discovered next morning by search-parties, far down the screes in a tangle of bushes. The monster cat was cold and stiff, but horribly menacing even in death. The handle of the dagger protruded from its body and has been left there at Sir Donald's express wish. The latter seemed peculiarly interested in the fact that a joint and claw of the creature's left foreleg were missing.

Sir Donald Fremling's leg was broken and he was badly mauled but is recovering rapidly.

The vicar hailed the search party from the summit of the Monk's Rock, where he had for hours vainly tried to restore Miss Deane to consciousness. She was carried home and appears to be making some progress toward recovery.

No trace has been discovered of the fourth member of the party—Torkel Yarl the cellist. It is feared that in searching for Sir Donald Fremling after his fall from the rock, Yarl himself lost his footing and fell to the unplumbed depths of the gully between Monk's Rock and Greenfell.

The White People

***By* FRANK BELKNAP LONG, Jr.**

Out of the grass when the dew is wet
  Their houses lean and their hoards are set
    Deep in the woods that are not yet.

Out of the earth when the night is cold
  Their worm-dogs lean and over the wold
    They fly with tales that are not told.

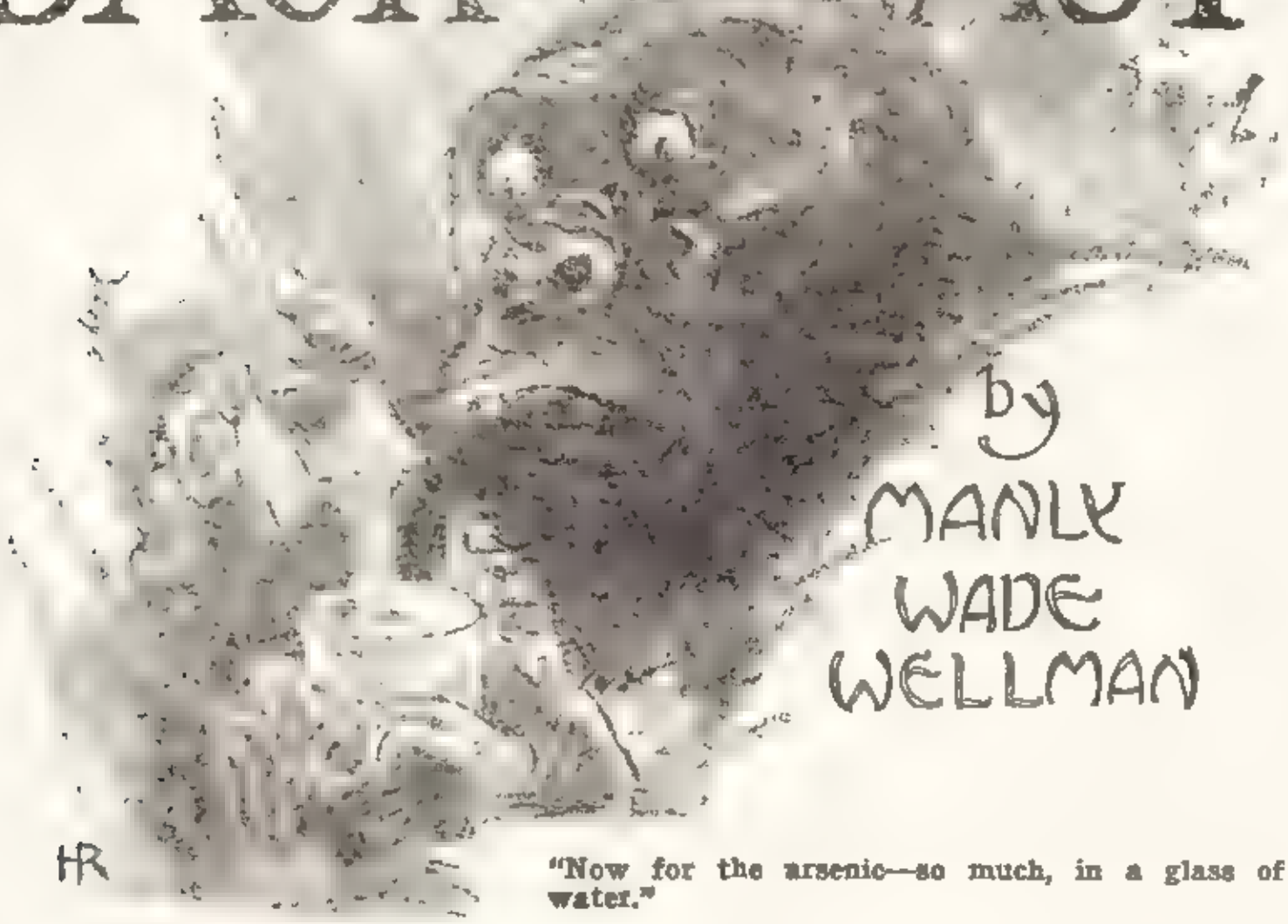
Out of the wold when the moon rides low
  Their witch-fires flicker, and tapers glow
    To guide the goblins to and fro.

Out of the lake when the comets pass
  Their maidens rise; and over the grass
    They crawl like shadows on a glass.

Out of the East when the stars spin high
  They dance and dance and the years go by
    And the sun and moon fade out of the sky

And still they dance.

BACK to the BEAST



by MANLY WADE WELLMAN

"Now for the arsenic—so much, in a glass of water."

(From the Smith City Mirror, June 26, 1927)

POLICE are searching today for Dr. J. E. Lawlor, well-known physician and scientist, following a report from his secretary, James Brock, that he had disappeared from his home at 2100 Van Ness Avenue.

According to Brock, Dr. Lawlor locked himself into his private laboratory twelve days ago, ordering his servants not to disturb him, and to send food down by means of a dumbwaiter. As he had followed this plan several times before while working on experiments, Brock complied with his request. The time set was ten days and when there had been no response from the laboratory during the two days following the elapse of this period, Brock feared some accident and, with the help of Georges Dmitri, Dr. Lawlor's cook, and Emil Bonner, his chauffeur, he forced the door this morning and found that the doctor was gone.

A weird angle is added to the incident by the dead body of a large ape which Brock found in a corner of the disordered laboratory. Although Dr. Lawlor was known to be interested in natural history and to have conducted several experiments with animals recently, Brock stated that he was sure the ape was not in the laboratory when it was closed twelve days ago. The table was covered with papers, which have been turned over to the police.

Brock, Dmitri and Bonner are held for questioning by Chief of Police John Walton.

Dr. Lawlor has no immediate family. A brother, Stanley Lawlor, of Topeka, Kansas, has been notified.

(From the Smith City Mirror, June 28, 1927)

ATTEMPTS to determine the species of the ape found dead in the laboratory of Dr. J. E. Lawlor, who disappeared last Saturday, were unsuccessful when Professor F. W. Baylor, head of the natural science department of the state university, said today that he had never seen such a creature before.

"There are eight kinds of anthropoid apes known to science," said Professor Baylor, "but this ape belongs to none of them. It has some of the characteristics of several, but resembles no single kind greatly. It is either a freak or of a species unknown until now."

Professor Baylor has ordered the animal embalmed and intends to send it to fellow-students of natural history in Chicago.

(From the Smith City Mirror, June 29, 1927)

JAMES BROCK, private secretary of Dr. J. E. Lawlor, 2100 Van Ness Avenue, was placed under arrest today to face charges of kidnaping and possibly murder of his employer last Saturday.

The arrest took place following the reading of papers purporting to be a journal of an experiment performed by the doctor, which Brock turned over to the police upon his employer's disappearance. Brock had been held for questioning, but was given his liberty Saturday.

The contents of the journal were not made public, but Chief John Walton described them as "preposterous and unbelievable, a forgery by Brock to cover a very evident crime."

(Extracts from the papers given to police by James Brock as the journal of Dr. James Everett Lawlor)

JUNE 15—All is in readiness for my experiment—the final step in my great work that will afford scientists a true glimpse of how man appeared in the dim past. The narrow persons who refuse to believe in evolution will be forced to see the truth, for we will confront them, not with theories, but with proofs.

I have material now that would fill a great book—notes telling how I first discovered the combination of elements that induces deterioration and of my experiments with it, first on the lowest forms of life, then on more complex animals, with surprizing and enlightening results. Years have been consumed in this study, but soon they will be paid for when I reveal what I have learned.

The elements for the two serums, products of nearly a lifetime of labor and observation, are at hand. One serum is the deteriorator, which when properly mingled and administered will make vital changes in the organs and tissues of an animal, changes which finally result in giving it the appearance of its ancestors untold ages ago. This change can be arrested by the administration of the counter-agent, which will restore the transformed creature to its former condition.

I do not suppose that any person less determined or less scientific in mind than I would dare perform this experiment upon himself; but after all, it is as safe as such a thing can be. I have studied its effects and powers too much and too long to go wrong now, and I know that I shall not be mentally incapable of handling it. The change is physiological, not psychological. Foretelling the

course of the whole process is a mere matter of rationalization.

As I plan it, I will let the deteriorator work in my blood for five days, then the counter-agent for five days, to make sure that the effects of the experiment are completely dissipated. Thus I expect to see in my mirror what my ancestors were like five thousand centuries ago, and then return to the body and semblance of Dr. Lawlor, all within two weeks at the least.

I have locked my door for ten days. Brock, a sound, sensible fellow who obeys my orders without questioning, will see to it that I am undisturbed. And after this private experiment, I shall present my findings to my fellow-scientists as the proof of their theories. Who can say that my name shall not be numbered with those of the great evolutionists?

June 16—For twenty-four hours I have had the serum in my blood. With what care I compounded it and injected it into the vein of my arm, you may well imagine. The effects were noticeable at once. My blood flowed faster and for a few moments I felt strangely light-headed, as if I had been drinking. This latter feeling passed away and I perspired freely, but felt no unpleasant sensations. Throughout the day I have taken notes on the progress of the experiment, and tonight my mirror shows me that it is a success.

The change in my appearance has not been so great as I expected, but it is very evident. I am florid and ruddy where I have generally been pale. I am far more robust and all over my body my hair has grown out, especially on the breast and shoulders and outsides of the arms—a strange condition for me, always smooth-skinned and of late years partly bald. I never felt better physically in my life, and I look, not the fine-drawn and slender scientist, but a full-bodied, really splendid savage.

In excess of well-being and in joy at the certain fulfilment of my expectations, I danced and leaped up and down this evening. Then, a little ashamed of myself, I sat down to write.

June 17—The effects of the serum are more pronounced today. Where yesterday I was but a primitive man, still decidedly human, I am today a man with a pronounced bestial look. My forehead has receded, my jaw is heavy, with sharp-pointed teeth. The change works in me every moment; I can feel it in my flesh and bones. Among other things, I am positively shaggy. The hair makes my clothes a discomfort and I have left them completely off.

I am never weary of watching my body as it changes almost before my very eyes. It is especially interesting to see how springy and flexible my joints have become, and how my feet have a tendency to turn their palms inward. This is because of the great toe, which is beginning to stand out from the others like a thumb; excellent proof that our ancestors were tree-dwellers and could get a grip with their feet.

June 18—When I awoke on my cot this morning, my first glance was toward the mirror. It was unable to recognize myself, unable to recognize even the thing I had been last night. In the broad, coarse face, with flat nose, splay nostrils, little beady eyes under beetling brows, wide mouth and brutal jaws, in the hairy, hulking body, there was no reminder of what had once been Dr. Lawlor. Some scholars would be frightened at the speed and effectiveness with which the serum has worked, but I can think of nothing save the triumph to science.

I am stooped considerably and stand unsteadily on my legs; not that they are not strong, but the tendency of my feet to turn inward has increased, so that I walk for the most

part on the outer edges. Their prehensile powers are developed, too, and they can pick up objects quite easily.

It is also interesting to note that my mental processes have not changed one whit—I can think as clearly and as deeply as ever. As I predicted, the serum does not effect the brain tissues; or, if it does, it does not keep them from functioning properly.

I have been hungry all day. The food Brock sent to me was not sufficient, especially as regards meat, and I must send up a note with the empty dishes for him to increase the amount.

June 19—This part of the experiment will stop tomorrow, for I shall then mix and administer the counter-agent.

Tonight I see myself to be an eery creature, half beast, half man. I am hard put to it to walk without supporting myself on the table and the backs of the chairs. So must our ancestors have looked when they swung down from the trees to achieve their first adventures on the ground and to conquer the world.

These five days, what with the many notes I have taken, will provide a fitting climax for the scientific book that I contemplate. How it will astound the world! What honors and distinctions may descend upon me! Fame is mine, certainly; fortune, if I wish it, may follow.

So good-night and good-bye, my primitive self yonder in the mirror. Tomorrow I shall commence the journey back to the appearance of Dr. Lawlor, that I may immortalize you in all your fascinating grotesqueness.

JUNE 20—How could I—oh, how could I not provide against this? With all the machinery of my experimentation evidently flawless, I must forget a single item—an item maddeningly simple, maddeningly obvious, and yet a thing that has proved my undoing.

Let me remain sane for a moment and marshal the incidents as they occurred. There is not much to tell. This morning I went to my shelf of chemicals for the ingredients to compound into the counteracting serum. My hands, which of course had become clumsy and primitive, seemed to have trouble in picking up the little vials, but this did not worry me as I began the combining of my materials. Two of them I mixed in a graduated glass and then reached for a pipette to administer the third.

But my unsteady manipulation did not allow the proper proportion to flow in. I released a drop too much, and though there was a corresponding effervescence, I could see that the mixture was a failure. I poured it out and tried again, with the same result. With growing uneasiness I made a third attempt, and again my clumsy hands failed me.

Too late, I realized that the mingling of the elements in the proper proportions and manner had been a task that required all the delicacy of a skilled chemist. My hands, no longer the deft, steady hands of Dr. Lawlor, were those of a sub-human creature, and as such not equal to the feat!

Horrible, horrible! I moaned aloud when I realized what had happened and what would follow. Without the counter-agent I could not neutralize, or even halt, the progress of the deteriorator. Down I must go, back along the road up which the human race has struggled for untold centuries!

Again and again I desperately tried to mix the dose, until I had used up all my materials. Once or twice I thought that I had approximated the proper mingling, but when I injected it, there was no effect.

I sit here tonight, a rung farther toward the beast from whence we

sprang, instead of on the road back toward man. Like one lowered into a well, I see above me a circle of light growing smaller and dimmer as I descend into darkness and horror! What shall I do?

[*From this point forward, the journal is written in an almost unintelligible scrawl.*]

June 24—For three days I have not written. I have not slept and have eaten only when the pangs of hunger roused me from my half-trance of misery. Horror has closed over my head like water.

At first I searched frantically for more materials for the counter-agent, literally wrecking my laboratory, but to no avail. I had used it all in trying to mix the saving dose three days ago.

Today was to have been the last day of my experiment. Perhaps the servants will force the lock if I do not come out. And then?

I could never make them understand. I have no more power of speech than any other beast, for a beast I have surely become. I can not bear to look in the mirror, for I see only a dark, hairy form, hunched over the table, a pencil clutched in its paw. And that is I, James Lawlor! What wonder that I border on the edge of insanity?

Let whoever reads these words take warning from my plight. Do not meddle with the scheme of things as nature has planned—delve not into her mysterious past. I have done that, and it was my complete and dreadful undoing. If it had not come in this way it would have come in another, I do not doubt for a moment.

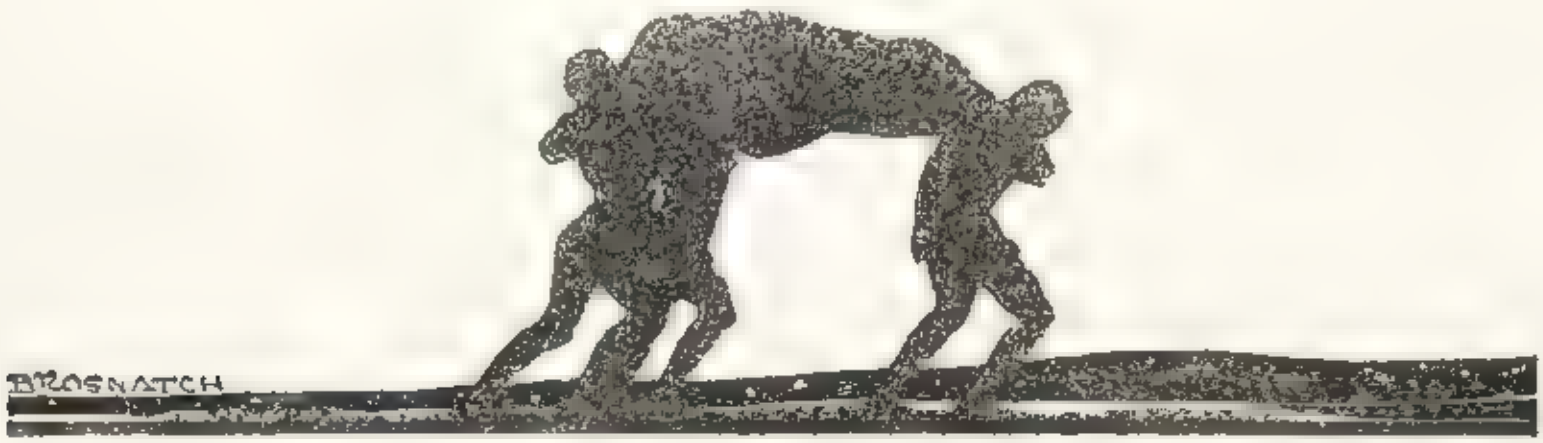
June 25—Morning. I have not budged from the chair where I sat to write last evening. I heard Brock's voice outside the door, asking me if I was coming out. I dared not make a sound in reply, and he went away.

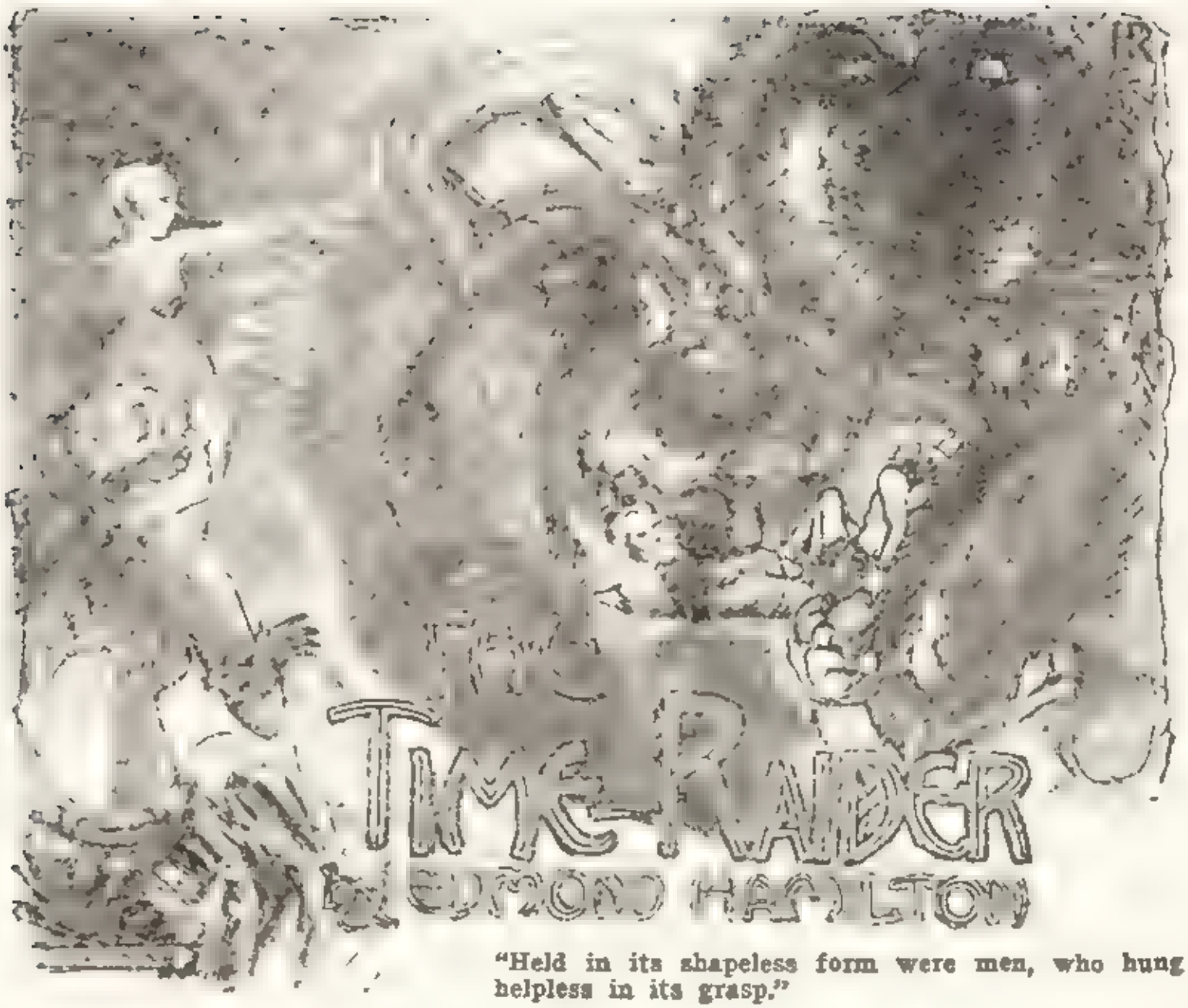
Is existence bearable in such a condition? Even now, the sliding back into lower and lower form continues. It will not be long before I am no longer even the ape-thing I appear. Perhaps the serum will carry me back through the ages until I am the slimy sea-crawler from which all life had its beginning. Oh, God! . . .

And as if in answer to that name, comes the memory of what still remains in a drawer of my table. Arsenic—not an easy death, but a quick one. So shall I die, for if ever a creature was justified in taking its own life, that creature is myself.

I will leave this journal as an account of what has happened, and as a warning to others. The formulas for my serums and all that pertains to them I will destroy. Never shall another scientist meet with my fate if I can order it otherwise. There, the papers are flaming in the grate. Now for the arsenic—so much, in a glass of water—farewell!

[*Here the journal ends.*]





"Held in its shapeless form were men, who hung helpless in its grasp."

The Story So Far

WHILE exploring the ruins of Angkor, Professor Cannell, an archeologist, is captured by a creature from far in the future, which sweeps back through time for its victims. He escapes, and is dropped into the Pacific Ocean by the Time-Raider, after being carried three years into the future. He returns to New York, and the Raider returns and seizes him again in the presence of his friends, Wheeler and Lantin. The two friends, using Cannell's theory of electronic vibrations, construct a vehicle that will carry them forward and backward in time, and plunge into the future to rescue Cannell, having first ascertained that the Raider's home is in central Illinois. Fifteen thousand years they penetrate into the future, and hide their time-ship to investigate a City of Cylinders set in the heart of a great glacial ice-sheet, which they think may be the lair of the Raider. They are captured by guards from the city, and Wheeler, meeting Denham (an English soldier in the armies of King George the Third) learns from him that he is there to fight—as a gladiator.

CHAPTER 8

THE PEOPLE OF THE CITY

A HARSH order from the guards ahead halted us, and I had time to survey the room in which we stood. It was a circular room, at the edge of which we were grouped. From where we stood, the walls swept away in a great curve on either side, meeting directly opposite us, as it seemed, some ninety feet away. The floor of the room was of smooth, black stone, resembling marble, while the curving walls were of the same white material as the building's exterior. A hundred feet above the floor was a ceiling of white, and I saw at a glance that this one

great hall occupied the whole lower half of the cylindrical building's interior, the upper half, no doubt, being divided into smaller apartments. Set in walls and ceiling were many of the glowing bulbs, and from these a cascade of ruddy light poured down on the people in the room.

There must have been nearly a hundred of these people, men and women. They lay on couches along the room's edge, with long, curving tables of green metal before them, like the banquet halls of the ancient Romans. A shock went through me as I looked at the feasters, for they were unlike any of the people I had seen as I entered the city. These people were all tall and perfectly proportioned, and all were golden-haired, men and women alike. They were attired in short robes or tunics of brilliantly colored silks, and some wore circlets of flashing gems.

With a sudden shock it came to me that these were the first women I had seen in all this city, for there had been none among the guards and slaves outside. But before I could ponder this fact, it was swept from my mind by my wonder at the other things in the room.

The feasters, I saw, were engaged in drinking from transparent goblets which held brightly colored liquids. I could see no solid food of any kind on the tables, but there were many urns and flagons and amphoræ filled with the bright fluids. Long lines of the white-robed, stiffly marching slaves passed and repassed behind the couches of the feasters, with metal trays holding other glass and metal vessels, which they placed on the tables.

Two other things I noted before my brief survey of the place was interrupted. One was that among the laughing, shouting people at the tables there was not one face that would not be called beautiful. All seemed youthful, with the beauty of youth, and its high spirits, yet an impression of evil came to me as I watched them. I sensed, beneath their jesting and laughing, a cold, indolent *heartlessness*.

The other thing I noted was the source of the crystalline music. Across the room from me, in an alcove, were the musicians, slaves who operated an intricate instrument which allowed water to fall on thin plates of metal, in single drops or streamlets, producing a tumultuous chiming like a storm of silver bells, wild and clear and sweet, and for all its tempestuousness, oddly harmonious.

My companions had been surveying the scene, like myself, but it was evident from the expressions on their faces that it was not new to them. I wondered for what purpose we had been brought there, and remembering the Englishman's interrupted explanation, turned to speak to him. But as I did so, came another interruption, and with it my answer.

One of the men at the tables rose and uttered a brief order, and at once a great black slave strode across the room, seized a mace of metal, and with it struck a tremendous blow on a hanging brazen gong. At once the chatter and song at the tables stopped, and all eyes were turned toward ourselves. I felt their gaze sweeping over us, and involuntarily shuddered. Then, beside us, the captain of the guards barked out an order, that sounded across the silence like a whiplash. And at once two of the men who stood beside me strode out to the center of the room, to the wide, clear floor there, and stood facing each other.

There was a rippling whisper through the spectators at the tables, a murmur of pleasurable excitement. Without heeding it, the two men at the room's center inspected each other with fierce eyes.

One of the two was a proud, dark-faced figure, high-nosed and gleam-

ing-eyed, dressed in torn, flowing robe and with a tightly twisted turban on his head. He jerked from his belt a long, curved simitar and whirled it above his head, giving vent to a ragged, high-pitched yell of defiance. An Arab, I thought, maybe one of the very hordes that had carried the green banner of the Prophet over three continents like a whirlwind. He was a fierce enough spectacle, as he shook his gleaming blade aloft, but his opponent was a fit one, a gigantic Northman in leathern jerkin, whose blue eyes gleamed as he too sprang forward, brandishing aloft a great ax in one hand, and carrying a small, circular shield in the other.

With weapons upraised, the two cautiously neared each other, circling like wary tigers, searching for an opening. I turned away, and saw that the feasters were wholly intent now on the two opponents, and in that moment I understood the meaning of the Englishman in saying that we had been brought here to fight. For it was so, and all in our ragged, fierce group would no doubt be forced to fight and slay one another to amuse the indolent spectators at the tables, as the gladiators of ancient Rome had struck each other down in the great games. And what of myself?

There was a sudden great shout from the tables, and I turned my attention back to the struggle at the center of the floor. The Arab's blade had darted past his opponent's shield and had wounded the latter in the shoulder with a flashing down-stroke. But the leather-clad giant was not beaten. Though blood was streaming down from his shoulder now, he said no word, only lifted his shield higher and circled around the other, with ax still poised ready to strike. The tense silence had been broken by that first shout and now those at the tables were calling out to the two fighters, warnings and advice, I supposed, and were laying wagers on the result of the fight.

Suddenly the Arab again darted in, and again his blade slashed the other's arm, but as he stepped swiftly back, his foot slipped on the blood that smeared the smooth floor, and he staggered for a moment, striving to regain his balance. In an instant the uplifted ax crashed down through his skull and he fell like a dropped weight, his own spouting arteries adding to the red stains on the floor. The other stepped back, panting, and a great shout of applause crashed out from the spectators at the tables. The Northman rejoined our group, slaves rushed out and cleared the floor, and at a command, two more of our number rushed onto the floor and faced each other with drawn swords.

The circling and darting of the former duel was repeated, and in a few minutes one of the two lay dead and the other was limping back to us, bleeding. And another pair took their place.

For the fifth combat, the young Englishman beside me was called onto the floor, with a small Japanese in ancient, quilted armor as his opponent. The Japanese was armed with two short, broad-bladed swords, with which he chopped and slashed at his opponent, while Denham had but his thin, fragile-looking rapier. Yet he evaded all the sweeps and thrusts of his adversary's blades, and with a sudden lightning stab of the needlelike rapier he ended the duel, unscathed. He came back toward us, jauntily, unheedful of the great applause that followed his feat. I gripped his hand warmly, for in the short time I had known him, a sudden sympathy had sprung up between us, born of the fact of our mutual race and language, in this strange city.

THERE were but few of us left now who had not already fought, and at an order from the leader of the

guards, one of these stepped out on the floor, a lithe, snaky Italian, with beady black eyes and an evil smile. The captain of the guard snapped out another order, looking at me, but I could not understand and looked around helplessly. His face flushed dark with anger, and he started wrathfully toward me, but the Englishman intervened, with rapid explanations.

"You are to fight Talerri," he said, indicating the Italian, and a wave of icy cold swept over me for a moment, then receded. "Here, take my sword," he continued, drawing and handing it to me, "and be fearful of foul fighting. Talerri was one of Cæsar Borgia's bravos and is a dangerous swordsman, full of treacherous tricks."

Half dazed, I gripped the rapier's hilt and walked out to face the Italian. "Good luck!" called Denham, behind me, but I did not look back.

As I strode out to where the Italian awaited me, I dimly saw the curving walls, the ruddy lights, and the white faces of those at the tables, turned toward me. The whole scene misted before my eyes, then cleared, and into my vision came the face of Talerri, who was regarding me with a derisive smile. And the realization came to me, coldly and clearly, that unless I killed my opponent, he would kill me.

I raised the blade in my hand. I had been a skilful fencer in my days at the university, but had not handled a foil for years. Yet the long, slender rapier was much like a foil itself, and as I twirled it in my grasp, some little confidence came to me. I glanced back momentarily, and saw Denham smiling encouragingly at me. And now the Italian advanced toward me, the same hateful smile passing over his face as he saw me raise the rapier to meet him.

At the first clash of our blades, I knew myself facing a master of swordsmanship, one who was doubtless in constant practise. So I threw all my efforts into staving off his first lightning rushes, though to this day I wonder that I was able to do so. His point seemed to stab at me simultaneously from a dozen different positions, and I parried more by instinct than by design. As it was, his blade passed twice through my shirt, so close was it. But after that first series of flashing rushes, the Italian drew back for a moment and we circled warily.

Again he came on, with a lightning feint at my heart. As my rapier flashed down to foil the stroke, his own stabbed upward, in a straight thrust intended to pierce through my left eye to the brain. It was a stab that could not be parried, but instinctively I swerved my head aside from that flashing point, and missing the eye, his blade grazed along the left side of my forehead, sending a stream of blood trickling down my cheek. At sight of that red stream, a shout of approval crashed out from the tables.

But now anger was rising in me, and ceasing to stand only on the defensive, I thrust out savagely at my opponent. He gave back a little under my unexpected attack, but suddenly I felt very tired, and knew that the combat must end soon if it was to end in my favor. As I thrust and parried there, the walls and lights and faces around me faded from view, and replacing them came the long, sky-lighted gymnasium where I had learned to fence. I seemed to hear the clicking foils and stamping feet there, and the voice of our trim little instructor explaining the most difficult of all thrusts, the time-thrust. Steadiness and accuracy were the very foundations of that difficult play, I knew, and it would be sheer madness for one as weary and rusty at sword-play as myself to try it, but as we surged back and forth on the

smooth floor, I decided that it was my only chance, for the Italian was pressing me ever more closely.

Watching for a favorable opportunity, I dropped my guard for a single instant, leaving my heart exposed. Instantly Talerri's blade darted in like a striking serpent, his whole body behind that straight stab. My own rapier was extended toward him, and in the split-second before his point touched me, my own blade clicked gently against his, deflecting it to one side where it passed harmlessly by me, while the momentum of his leaping rush brought him right onto my outstretched rapier, spitting him. I felt the blade rip through him as through a man of sawdust, the hilt rapping against his ribs. I jerked it forth and he choked, gasped, and fell to the floor dead.

There was a shattering roar of applause from all around, and tired and sickened, I stumbled back to the group of fellow captives at the floor's edge, where Denham greeted me eagerly. While he congratulated me on my victory, the others in the group looked at me with something of respect on their fierce faces.

Weary from the hours on the time-car, and half-nauseated by the bloodshed I had seen and taken part in, I sank down onto a step and watched without interest the remaining two combats. When these were finished, another order was given and we were hurried back down the stairs up which we had come. Conducting us down a different corridor, the guards separated us, thrusting us in pairs into small cells along the corridor.

I had hoped to be placed in the same cell as Denham, for I wanted much to speak further with him, but luck was against me and I was paired off with the blond giant who had killed the Arab in the first combat. A vicious shove sent us reeling into the little room, and behind me I heard the thick metal door clang shut.

CHAPTER 9

PRISONED

For ten days I lay in that little cell, prisoned with the big Northman. At my first inspection of the place, I saw that there was no possibility of escape, for the walls were of smooth stone, and the only opening in them was that of a two-inch pipe that served to ventilate the cell. There was no window, as we think of it, yet the room was light enough in the daytime, for as the sun rose, the side of the cell facing on the building's outer wall became invisible, allowing plenty of light to enter. This explained a fact that had puzzled me, the absence of windows on the exteriors of the cylindrical buildings of the city. Evidently the people of the city treated the outside walls of their buildings in such a manner that in daylight they were invisible from the inside, while perfectly opaque when viewed from without.

I had other evidence of the scientific attainments of these people in the food that was furnished us twice each day. That food was nothing but a clear golden liquid, with a slight oily flavor but otherwise tasteless. Yet I found that it contained all the food-elements necessary for the human body, since in all my time in this strange city I had no other food, and never felt need of any other.

I found my cell-mate a dull enough companion. He was morose and fierce in disposition, and very suspicious of me. I think that he considered me a spy. I found that he knew a little English, a strange, archaic English, but enough for us to carry on a broken conversation. To all my eager questions, though, the fellow replied with a cold stare. By this time I felt convinced that Lantin and I had found in this city the home of the Raider, since the fact of Denham's presence and that of these other men of many times

and races admitted of no other explanation. Yet when I asked the Norseman how he had come here, or if he had ever seen the Raider, he kept to a gloomy silence, and I cursed my luck in being confined with such a suspicious companion.

One service, though, he did do for me, and that was to teach me the strange language used by the guards and masters of the city around me. That tongue, I learned, was the Kanlar tongue, while the bright-haired master-race of the city were Kanlars. The language itself was not hard to learn, and in the long hours I lay imprisoned I acquired considerable facility in expressing myself in it.

Sometimes, too, the Norseman would break his silence, and growing excited with his own words, would tell me long, interminable stories of the wild adventures he had taken part in, the shield-ringed ships that he had sailed in, to leave fire and death along peaceful coasts, the long list of men he had slaughtered. His cold eyes burned as he related tales of butchery that appalled me, but when I ventured to interject a single question he would regard me stonily and then relapse into silence again.

The days went by, and through the transparent wall I watched night give way to dawn, dawn to noon, and noon to dusk and night. Much I thought of Lantin in those days. I wondered what fate had been his in the gigantic central building, whether he was alive or dead. Wondered, too, if I would ever find that out, for it was evident that we were being reserved for another gladiatorial battle, and I was not confident of coming through again unscathed.

One thing occurred, in those days of imprisonment, which still makes me shudder, sometimes, at the memory of it. The transparent side of our cell faced a smooth expanse of green lawn, with gardens beyond it, and most of my time I spent lounging against it, looking out. Very few people passed by there, now and then a few slaves, but scarcely ever any of the Kanlar people. So on the eighth day of my confinement, when I saw a slave approaching from a distance, I moved over to the invisible wall and watched him.

He was carrying a tool that looked much like a common garden-hoe, and walked toward me with that stiff, rigid movement that marked the white-robed slaves. He came closer, I glanced at his face, then reeled back against the side of the cell. For it was Talerri!

It was the Italian I had killed eight days before, garbed as a slave and walking with the same inhuman, puppetlike motion that all these strange servants used. He came closer toward me, so that I could see his staring eyes, then, with an angular movement, he turned aside and passed from view along the building's side.

For hours I puzzled over it, rejecting with a certain panic fear the one explanation that came to mind. I knew that I had killed the Italian that night, for my sword had pierced clean through his heart. Yet here he was, working as a slave for the Kanlars. And what of the other slaves, then, these rigid, staring-eyed figures? Were they too——?

For hours I speculated on the thing, but could find no rational explanation for it, nor would the Norseman enlighten me. Finally I gave it up as a mystery beyond me, and strove to banish it from my mind.

Two more days dragged out, days that were like weeks to me. I felt that I must soon go mad, if I were longer imprisoned. And then, sharply ending the monotony of dreary hours, there came a summons, a summons that in the end proved to be a call to an adventure utterly undreamed of by Lantin or myself.

CHAPTER 10

THE TEMPLE OF THE RAIDER

All that day I had sensed a tense activity outside, and many times there was the tramp of feet down the corridor outside our cell, as companies of the guards came and went. As sunset came, I stood beside the transparent wall and watched its brilliant colors fade from the sky.

Overhead, now, the aircraft of the Kanlars were flickering continuously past, all heading toward the giant cylinder that stood at the city's center, and when I scrambled up a little higher against the wall, to get a glimpse of the street, I saw that that street was crowded with masses of the armored guards and the staring-eyed slaves, all pressing on toward the same building.

Darkness came, and the noise of activity outside died away, so that it seemed that all the city around us was deserted, nor was there any sound from the building above us. For all of two hours after the darkness, we sat there, listening, waiting. Once I thought I heard a distant ringing music, but decided that my ears had been deceived. Then, abruptly, there was the stamp of sandals on the floor of the corridor, and we heard the doors of the cells along it being opened.

Our own was flung wide, as we rose, and I saw that a score of the guards waited outside, their leader ordering us to come out, which we were glad enough to do. Once in the corridor, I found Denham and the others of the group I had met before, shackled to each other, wrist to wrist, in a single file. The Northman and myself were fettered to the end of the line, and then we set out, a long file of guards on each side of us, marching us down the corridor and outside the building.

The big street up which I had come before was utterly deserted, as we turned into it. I looked back along its length, lit with the crimson bulbs, a winding serpent of red light that stretched away out into the country beyond the city, out to where our time-car lay hidden in the hills. At the thought of it, so fierce a desire seized me to win back to it, and my own time, that had I not been shackled I would have made a break for freedom down the empty street. But as it was, I had no choice, and followed the others in our fettered line down the wide street toward the gigantic cylindrical building at its end.

That great pile seemed to loom higher and higher as we drew near it. Brilliant, winking lights along its sides outlined it against the gloom of night, a huge, erect cylinder of smooth stone, its flat top all of a thousand feet in width, and nearly a half-mile above the ground. Obscured as the immense edifice was by the darkness, yet the vague glimpses I got of its sky-flung walls staggered me. And we were being marched directly toward it.

A quarter-mile from the building, the flat street we followed ended, changed to a wide, smooth ramp that led up toward the giant edifice in a slight upward slant. We went up that ramp, the guards still on either side, till we stood under the very shadow of the gigantic, perpendicular walls, and now I saw that the ramp led up to and through a wide, high-arched entrance cut in the building's side, much like the entrance of the cylindrical building where I had been prisoned.

We passed up and through that arched entrance, and were in a long tunnel, similarly arched, and cut through solid, seamless stone. It was a hundred feet in length, and as we passed on down its length it came to me that this must be the thickness of the great building's sides. The idea was too prodigious for speculation,

even, and I shook it off, peering ahead toward the tunnel's end, where a ruddy light flooding down from above marked that end.

A few moments, and we had reached the tunnel's mouth, and emerged from it into the vast cylinder's interior. I swept one startled glance around that interior, then felt myself staggering, reeling, falling. The immensity of the place was soul-shaking, bearing down on me with a weight that seemed physical, crushing my thoughts down into nothing but dazed awe and terror.

I had imagined the building's interior to be divided, partitioned into apartments, but instead, the whole interior was one titanic room, shaped by the outside walls and roof, its sides looming up, dimly and vaguely, into a hazy darkness that hid their upper parts from view. Along the sides were many of the light-emitting bulbs, but these merely burned red holes in the dimness that surrounded the building's interior, rather than illuminated it.

Starting at the wall, and extending twenty feet out toward the center of the room, the floor was of black stone, a flat, continuous ring of smooth material that circled the whole room. Inside of this ring was the real floor, a single, huge disk of burnished metal, smooth as ice and as seamless, over nine hundred feet in diameter. And except for ourselves, who stood on the black ring near the entrance, there was nothing whatever on black circle or burnished floor, no people, tables, altar, nothing but the immense expanse of smooth metal and the comparatively thin black circle that surrounded it.

I looked up, and saw for the first time the people of the city. Cut in the thickness of the prodigious walls of the building were broad balconies, one above the other, ringing the building's interior as far up as I could see in the haze that hung above, and in these balconies were the dwellers of the city, Kanlars, guards and slaves. The lowest balcony, which was only a few feet above the floor, jutted forth in a smaller square gallery, a little away from where I stood, and in this projecting square sat three of the bright-haired Kanlars, the oldest-appearing men I had yet seen among them, two garbed in long robes of solid crimson while the other's garment was of deepest black. They sat there calmly, looking away across the big floor toward the great hall's other side. This lowest gallery, and the three directly above it, were filled with the Kanlars, while in the unnumbered galleries above these were the armored guards and the slaves. The only entrance to these galleries that I could see was a single narrow, winding stairway, a spiral stairway that began on the black circle of stone near the wall and slanted up from balcony to balcony, circling the building's sides several times as it spiraled up, and evidently leading up to the very roof of the place.

While I surveyed the scene, other ragged groups like our own had entered, escorted by guards, until a considerable number of us had been collected there near the entrance. Now one of the crimson-robed figures who sat in the gallery that jutted out from the lowest balcony, rose and uttered an order. My knowledge of the Kanlar language was too rudimentary for me to understand him, but when he had finished and resumed his seat, a delighted murmur swept over the massed crowds in the balconies.

Before I had time to speculate, the captain of the guards who watched us snapped out brief orders, and immediately eight of our number ran out of the center of the metal floor, where they at once drew their weapons and faced each other, in four individual combats.

In a few minutes, the four duels were over, but only three of the contestants came back from the floor's center. To my surprize, then, instead of being re-shackled to the rest of us, the three were handed armor and weapons like that of the other guards, which they donned at once. I began to understand now the purpose of these combats. Evidently the bravest fighters were weeded out in preliminary duels, such as I had taken part in, and the survivors of these first battles were then pitted against each other, the victors being adjudged worthy to enter the company of the guards. But where were these ragged fighters brought from?

The combats went on, always eight men battling at once, and I saw that our number was growing smaller very rapidly. Neither Denham nor I had yet been called on to fight, but my heart was beating rapidly, for I expected each time to be among the next eight. The blades clashed on, at the floor's center, and group after group went out from us, either to return and don the armor of the guards or to be dragged off the floor by slaves, dead or dying. The Kanlars in the lower balconies laughed and chatted as the ragged fighters on the floor slew each other, the massed guards above shouted their approval at each shrewd blow, and the fighting continued until finally but ten of our number were left, and by a freak of chance, both Denham and I were of that ten.

The fights on the floor ended, one by one, and swiftly the guards unshackled eight of our number and thrust them out onto the floor. I stood appalled. For the two who were left were myself and the Englishman!

While the swords clicked and flashed out on the floor, I stood in a daze, dismayed at the ironical trick which fate had played me. Of all the men in the city, I must fight the one whom alone I knew and liked. In a space of seconds, it seemed, the four fights on the floor had ended, and the fetters on my wrists were loosed. Together, hesitantly, Denham and I walked out onto the floor. Shouts of applause and encouragement came down from the balconies, for ours was the last fight, and the spectators wanted an exciting one.

STANDING there at the very center of the huge building, Denham and I faced each other. Simultaneously we grasped the hilts of our rapiers, half drew them, and then, with a common impulse, slammed the blades back down into their sheaths. Without speaking, my companion stepped over and flung an arm across my shoulders, then tilted up his head and favored the spectators in the balconies with an insolent stare.

A howl of rage went up as it became evident that we would not fight each other. A torrent of taunts and execrations poured down on us from above, but we continued to lounge, arm in arm, as nonchalantly as possible.

Out from the black edge of the floor rushed a half-dozen of the guards, who seized us and hurried us off the floor, amid a storm of abuse from above. Instead of returning with us to the entrance, the guards led us toward the bottom of the spiraling stair and there stationed themselves beside us.

The angry cries in the balconies silenced, now, and a strange stillness filled the great hall. Music began, single, thrilling notes, like dropping peals of sound. Swiftly the lights began to dim, the glowing bulbs in the walls waning until all things in the vast room were wrapped in shadowy dusk.

The chiming music ceased, and over all that mighty fane was absolute silence, with no sound from Kanlars, guards or slaves. Then, in the

little projecting gallery where he sat, the black-robed oldster rose and spoke.

His deep, heavy voice rolled out over the vast room with awesome effect, breaking as it did the unearthly silence. He was chanting, uttering an invocation or prayer. The words came to my ears, thick and blurred, so that I understood few of them. But the effect was one of utter solemnity—the darkness, the massed, silent crowds above, and that one deep voice speaking on, rising and falling.

For minutes the voice rumbled on, then abruptly ceased. There was another full minute of the strange silence, and a tremendous ringing note sounded. Even after it had died, the echoes of it beat in my ears like ghostly carillons of tiny, elfin chimes. And as it died away, there was a heavy, grating sound and the whole vast metal floor abruptly sank down some six feet into what appeared to be a gigantic smooth-walled shaft, then slid sidewise with another grating jar, vanishing into some aperture prepared for it. And where the floor had been was now a tremendous circular abyss, a straight-sided pit of such titanic depth that, looking down into it, I fell weakly to my knees and was seized with sudden nausea.

I stood on the very edge of the abyss, on the ring of black flooring that was its rim. And down from that rim, the stone sides of the great shaft fell smoothly to an unguessed depth. Far, far below, I seemed to see glimmering lights that winked faintly. And I saw, too, that the spiral staircase which circled the great room's interior from floor to roof continued on down beneath the floor and circled around and around this circular chasm in the same way, winding down into the unguessed depths below.

I felt Denham pulling me back from the edge of the shaft, beside which I lay. Dimly I realized that all in the great building were now chanting, rolling forth the same invocation as the black-robed leader. Far above, now, at the very ceiling or roof of the cylinder, a light burgeoned out, a burning purple beam that clove its light down through the dim haze and shadows around it. A moment it hung there, then there was a faint sigh of wind, a puff of icy air, and down, straight down from the vast hall's roof, there raced like a misty plummet—the Raider!

It flashed down until it hung on a level with myself, in midair, poised at the very center of the circular abyss and floating there effortlessly. It hung there, its gray mass changing, fluxing, interlacing, while at its center hung the three little orbs of purple light, steady and unwinking. From all the massed thousands on the balconies a sigh of worship went up.

The chant rolled out, louder, fiercer, and through it sounded another single ringing note. There was another whistle of wind, and the three purple orbs of the Raider flashed to green, while the solid but fluxing mass of it changed to a spinning cloud of gray vapor, that swirled rapidly around the central lights. Another fierce gust of wind smote me, and abruptly the Raider had vanished.

Up in the balconies the chant went on, repeated again and again. I saw a sea of white faces above, all turned down toward the spot where the Raider had disappeared. Minutes passed. The chanting went on, low, vast and deep-toned.

Came another buffeting breeze, a tempest of shrill wind-sounds, and with startling suddenness the Raider reappeared, flashing back into being at the same spot where it had vanished, above the center of the abyss. Again the green orbs changed to purple, and its cloudy mass con-

tracted to the shifting but solid form it had occupied before. But now, held in its shapeless self, were men, who hung helpless in its grasp. It drifted over to the marble edge of the abyss, and loosed the men it held, then moved back to the pit's center.

The chanting swelled out, exultant, and I saw the men thus loosed struggle to their feet and look around with utter awe and terror. They were five in number, three in short white tunics who looked like men of ancient Greece, the other two wizened little figures with dark skin and long, wispy mustaches, either Huns or Tartars.

Again a ringing note cut through the chanting, and as if in obedience the Raider rose, floated up toward the vast hall's roof, whence it had come. It disappeared there, the purple light burned for a moment and vanshied, and the chanting finally ceased.

The bulbs glowed out, at once, and light filled the place. The crowds in the balconies began to leave, streaming down the narrow staircase toward the floor. Before they reached it, however, guards had reached and fettered the five men the Raider had left on the pit's edge, and they now brought them over and shackled them also to Denham and me.

Our little group stood now on the very edge of the abysmal shaft. Some twenty feet below us there was a little landing, from which the stair started, spiraling down and around the shaft, into the darkness below. I wondered momentarily how the landing was reached, but my wonder ceased as a guard touched a lever in the wall, causing a little metal stair to unfold swiftly from the side of the shaft itself, a light little series of steps that connected the black marble ring of flooring with the landing below.

At an order from the guards we stepped onto it, down it to the landing and on down the spiral stair, which was cut in the solid rock of the great shaft's sides. Looking back, I saw the steps down which we had come fold back into the wall, and a moment later the light from above was shut out as the great metal floor of the temple swung back into position above us with a grating clash.

Our only light now was from bulbs set in the smooth wall along the down-winding stair, and these gave hardly enough light to show us the next steps. A low wall about a yard in height, pierced with an ornamental design of openings, was our only protection from the abyss on our left. Yet the guards still marched us on, around and around the great shaft, in a tremendous, falling spiral, down, down. . . .

CHAPTER 11

THE CITY OF THE PIT

Soon a dim pearly light began to show far below us, a light that puzzled me. In the world above, I knew, it must be dawn, but how this was connected with the growing light below, if it was so connected, baffled me.

And now we reached the end of the shaft down whose sides we had come. It ended abruptly, and below on each side lay a great open space, obscured by drifting clouds of mist. But the stair did not end with the shaft. It dropped straight on down, a free, unsupported spiral of gleaming metal, winding down into the obscuring mists that hid its lower length. It was an eery thing to see, that gigantic twisted stairway, like a great corkscrew, vanishing down into the mists, like some pathway of the gods from heaven to earth. And it could hardly have been hung there by less than gods, I thought. No metal or material ever known to me would have been able thus to hold its unsupported weight in the form of

this stair, yet there it was, seemingly tossed there in godlike indifference to the laws of mechanics. In its way, it was as great a wonder as the great bulding above. As that thought came to me, the light around us began to grow, to redden like the sunrise, and the mists cleared, drifted away in masses, vanished. And there, beneath me, lay the pit.

I can only describe that pit by saying that it was like the inside of a round, squat bottle, the neck of the bottle being the shaft down which I had come. This great cavern below me was roughly circular in shape, all of four miles in diameter, and a mile from its level floor to its glowing roof. For that roof was glowing. Looking up at it as we marched on down, I saw that set in it were scores of brilliant globes of glass, from which a flood of growing light, golden light, sunlight, *daylight,* was pouring down.

I saw now that the spiral stair down which we marched reached down to the pit's floor, and touched it near its center. And I saw, too, that all of the great cavern's floor, from one towering side to another, was covered with mass on mass of white, roofless buildings, of all shapes, covering the floor of the pit and huddling closely beneath the perpendicular walls of smooth rock.

At the center of this great mass of buildings, directly below us, was a great open clearing, or plaza, and it was there that the stairway touched the pit's floor. And from this plaza, clear to the circling walls, nine streets branched out, radiating in every direction like the spokes of a wheel. Along those streets moved great masses of men, and these were the dwellers in the city, the people of the pit.

So it was that I looked first on the city of the pit, the city of the Raider, and its people, over whom his shadow had been cast. And, looking, I wondered if there in the massed crowds below were Lautin and Cannell, and if it were possible to find them, here.

Again our guards ordered us forward, and we marched on. But now only a low wall on each side protected us from the abyss, and there was no wall on the right side against which to cling. But our guards seemed to mind this not at all, and I judged that they had made many trips up and down the stair, to be thus hardened to its dangers.

As we descended, Denham explained to me in a low voice the origin of the lights on the roof. These were merely lenses of a kind, he said, which diffused into the cavern real sunlight brought from above. I had already seen and puzzled at the glass globes set on pedestals through the city of cylinders above, but now saw their purpose. Those globes received the sunlight, transmitted it in some unknown fashion down to the globes on the roof, which gave it forth again. Thus it was that day and night in the pit were the same as in the world above, and the light there waxed and waned in accordance with the rising and setting of the sun which these people never saw.

We drew closer and closer toward the ground, and now I saw that at the stair's end, where it touched and debouched on the pit's floor, it was closed by a high, heavy gate of metal, barred and spiked, and that on our own side of this gate was a force of some fifty of the guards, armed with long spears and also with curious little cylinders of shining metal which they carried in their belts, and which I guessed were weapons of a kind unknown to myself.

As we came down toward them, these guards drew aside and unlocked the big gate. Our own captors unshackled us, and then pushed us through it unceremoniously, so that we stood in the clearing or plaza.

And the gate was quickly shut and locked behind us.

Standing there, I forgot all else in the fascination of the scene around me. Across the open plaza, which was smoothly floored with stone, a great multitude of people were coming and going, and it was that shifting throng that held my gaze. For in it were men of every race and land and time, men of the far past and men of my own time, all seized and brought here by the Raider to mix and mingle in one vast, variegated throng. Even that first glance showed me that there must be thousands, tens of thousands of men prisoned in this gigantic under-city, and it showed me, too, that even as among the guards and slaves above, there were no women. All were comparatively young men, few being over middle age, and nearly all had the appearance of warriors.

Men of a thousand different centuries passed and repassed there before my eyes, men who had been flashed through the ages and brought there by the same alien being that had seized Cannell before my eyes, and that had seized, only a few hours before, the five newcomers who had come down the great stair with Denham and me.

For these, these crowds and masses of men that choked the streets and squares and buildings of this city of hell, these were the spoils of the Raider, gathered together for some unholy purpose of his own, and prisoned here in the pit, far beneath the city of the Kanlars. In a living panorama of the past, they streamed by me, a brilliant, barbaric throng.

Many of them were unknown in race to me, but many others I could recognize by their dress or features. There were Egyptians, shaven-headed men in long white robes, strangely aloof and silent in that noisy gathering. They carried short swords and bows, and I noticed that every one of the figures that passed before me wore weapons of some sort. I saw Assyrians, here and there, ravagers of the ancient world, wolf-faced, black-bearded men with burning eyes, clad in strange armor.

Three courtly, spade-bearded Spaniards sauntered by, carrying themselves as proudly as on the day when their galleons ruled the seas. A hulking, shock-headed savage clad in evil-smelling skins shambled by, with a giant gnarled club in his hand, his receding brow and jutting jaw proclaiming him a troglodyte, a man of the world's dawn. And right behind him came two stern-faced men in medieval armor, with the cross of the Crusaders blazoned on their battered shields.

Indians passed, with bow and tomahawk, hawk-faced and alert. Clear-skinned Greeks, laughing at some jest of their own. Chinese, quiet and inscrutable, whose eyes narrowed even further as they caught sight of the two wizened Tartars who had come down the stair with us. A tall frontiersman in suit of buckskin, with bowie knife in his belt, strode past, conversing with a helmed Phenician sea-captain. And everywhere, clustering always together in little groups, were Romans, legionaries in tunic, breastplate and helmet, with bronze short-swords, who looked contemptuously on all other races in the passing throng.

A HAND descended on my shoulder, and I turned, startled, to find that I had completely forgotten the Englishman, Denham, who stood behind me.

"Deuced strange, at first, isn't it?" he asked, smilingly, gesturing toward the moving pageant of the past, around us. Before I could answer, he went on, "You'd best come with me, now."

"Where?" I asked.

"Why, to my own barracks," he

answered. "That's what these buildings are for, you know, but as a newcomer, you'd be in trouble here in a minute, without someone to answer for you. And, too, I want you to meet my own friends."

He looked at me more sharply. "I take it that you're no great friend of——" and he stopped, raising his eyes eloquently upward.

"The Raider?" I asked, and when he nodded I said, "Not I! I'm here to find a man—two men."

"Find a single man here?" asked Denham, sweeping his hand around the crowded streets in a hopeless gesture. "It's impossible! And what would you do when you found him? Escape? That, too, is impossible. How would you get up the stair, through the city of the Kanlars? And even if you achieved the impossible and did get through, there would be no place to go, for all around the city above is nothing but wild, uninhabited country where they would easily hunt you down."

"No matter," I told him; "once I got clear of the city above, I could make good my escape."

He looked at me with sudden interest. "So," he murmured; "and perhaps if my friends and I could help you——," but then he checked himself. "I must see them," he said, "before saying more."

I nodded, a new line of thought opening up to me, and then with Denham leading, we went on down one of the branching streets. In that street was a replica of the noisy, motley throng that filled the plaza, and their cries filled the air with a babel of a thousand different tongues. I noted, though, that many spoke in the language of the Kanlars, and guessed that it was that tongue which served more or less as a means of communication between the thousands gathered here, a supposition I later found to be correct.

Most of the buildings along the street seemed to be the barracks Denham had spoken of, housing the city's occupants, though some of them appeared to be wine-shops of a sort, judging from the drunken men who reeled out of them. An inquiry to my companion elicited the information that the only food of the city was the same golden liquid which had been furnished me above, and which I learned was made artificially directly from the soil itself. Thus the cycle of foodstuffs in my own time, where a plant draws its substance from the soil and is then eaten, or where an animal feeds on the plants sprung from the soil, to be eaten by us in turn, was entirely eliminated by the Kanlars, who manufactured their food directly from the soil itself, recasting the chemical composition of it to produce the yellow fluid. This yellow liquid, I learned, was made by slaves in the city above and was piped down to the city below and dispensed to the hordes there in the little buildings which I had assumed to be wine-shops. It seemed that while the stuff was a perfect food when taken in small quantities, yet when an excess was drunk it produced a violent intoxication. And as it was dispensed freely, it was not wonderful that there were great debauches of drunkenness in this under-metropolis.

One result of that we saw, for all along the street there was fighting, deadly battles between men of far-differing times and races. There was no interference in these combats, for there were none of the guards or Kanlars through all the city, the occupants being left to fight their own battles on the principle of the survival of the fittest. An excited ring of spectators was gathered round each combat, shouting at and cheering the opponents, not dispersing until the fighting was over. As we passed the scene of one such duel, I

saw the victor dragging away the body of his late enemy.

"Where is he taking it?" I asked of Denham, motioning toward the receding figure.

"To the bottom of the stair," was his answer. "There is an iron rule that in any battle where a man is killed, the victor must carry the body of his opponent to the stair and hand it over to the guards there."

"But why?" I asked. "For burial above?"

Denham smiled grimly. "You saw the slaves in the city above," he said, "but did you notice how strange they were, how glassy-eyed and stiff-moving?"

When I nodded, he said, "Well, the slaves of the city above are men who have been killed here in the under-city."

At my exclamation of horror, he repeated his statement. "Man," he exclaimed, "you do not know the power of the Kanlars. With the wisdom that is theirs, such an accomplishment is child's-play."

"But how done?" I asked.

"Ask them," he answered darkly. "In some way they are able to bring back the breath of life into the dead men, to repair the wounds that killed them. They can make them live again, but not even the Kanlars can bring back their souls. They are just living, walking bodies, whom the Kanlars are able to control and to force to work their will in all things. Dead-alive, and slaves to the Kanlars!"

I shuddered deeply, for the idea was soul-sickening. Yet I knew now that Denham spoke truth, for I remembered how from my cell in the city above I had seen Talerri, garbed as a slave, Talerri, whom I had killed myself. It was an invention that would have aroused pride in the fiends of lowest hell, thus to raise dead men back to life and use them as servants. And I knew that this was but one of the dark evils that lay concealed under the rule of the laughing, bright-haired Kanlars.

While we talked we had been moving along the crowded street toward the distant wall of the pit. Finally, very near that wall, Denham turned in at a low, long building that was of white stone, and roofless, like most others in the city. I followed him inside, and looked around curiously.

The building's interior was a single large room, shaded from the light above by a suspended awning of green cloth. Ranged along the walls was a triple tier of metal bunks, in some of which lay cloth and fur robes. There was a long metal table at the room's center, and lounging in chairs around it, and in the bunks, were a score of men who looked up without interest as we entered.

Denham greeted them, and in reply they grunted lazily, looking at me incuriously. I followed my companion to the farther end of the room, where he seated himself in one of the bunks and motioned me to join him.

"My friends aren't here now," he said, "but they'll return before long."

A sudden curiosity prompted my next question. "How did you get here, Denham?" I asked. "Was it —the Raider?"

"Naturally," he answered. "It was the Raider, as you call it, that brought us all here, curse him. It was in the Colonial rebellion he got me."

"The American rebellion?" I asked, striving to understand his Eighteenth Century allusions.

"Of course," he answered. "We were quartered in Philadelphia, under that old fool, Howe. He liked the city, y'know, the bottle and the ladies. But the rest of us were itching for fight, and since we couldn't

fight the rebels, we soon took to fighting one another.

"There was a ball one night, and toward the end of it I began to have a few words with a Hessian attached to our staff. We were both a little scrambled, by then. Curse me if there weren't some fine cellars there! But as to the German, he and I got hotter and hotter, until he finally made the assertion that our commander was a fool. Personally, that was my opinion also, but I couldn't allow the Dutchman to say so, and the upshot of it was that we left the ball together and adjourned to an open field near by to resume the argument, with our swords.

"Before we had made a half-dozen passes, there was a hellish sound of wind, a big, gray cloud with burning green eyes seemed to drop down on us from above, and then the bottom dropped out of the world. When we came to our senses, we were standing up there in the big temple, with a dozen others. Of course, we didn't know then that we had been brought on through time, but we knew it was a damned strange place.

"They brought us down here, down the stair, and as soon as we were turned loose here, we resumed our dispute, borrowing swords from two bystanders. By luck, I pinked him. There was a big crowd around, cheering us on, and it was then that I met D'Alord, who is one of the friends I mentioned."

As Denham finished his story, I began to feel a sudden, utter weariness, for I had not slept for many hours. I yawned and rubbed my eyes, and at once Denham jumped up.

"Why, take the bunk, man," he ordered me. "Go ahead and sleep."

"But what of Lantin," I asked, "my friend? He's somewhere in the city here, I'm sure, and I must find him."

Denham shook his head doubtfully. "What does he look like?" he asked.

When I had described Lantin to him, his face cleared a little, I thought. "An elderly man, you said?" he questioned, and when I nodded, he continued, "That should make it easier to find him, then. There are hardly any but young men here, so your friend would be more conspicuous and easily located. But you go ahead and sleep, and I'll find my friends and look for your companion. If anyone can find him, we can."

I tried to thank him, but he waved my words aside with a smile and walked out of the room. I sank back in the bunk and closed my eyes. As drowsiness overcame me, there came to my ears the dull sound of voices of the men in the room, with now and then a shout or bellow of laughter. And even these faded from hearing as I sank, contentedly enough, down into the green depths of sleep.

CHAPTER 12

PLANS FOR ESCAPE

GOLDEN light again streamed through the windows when I finally woke, and I realized that in my utter weariness I must have slept the clock twice round. I swung out of the bunk and stood up, stretching.

There was only one man in the long room besides myself, a man who sat at the table, some distance away from me. As I looked at him he turned, saw me, and jumped up and hurried over toward me.

"Lantin!" I cried, extending my hands. He gripped them, his eyes sparkling.

"Where have you been?" I asked eagerly. "Were you in the city here all the time?"

"All the time since I left you," he affirmed. "They brought me directly here, Wheeler, and of course when I got here I knew at once that we had found the Raider's lair. Your friend

Denham found me, a few hours ago, and told me where you were, but when I came here I saw that you were sleeping and didn't waken you."

"You should have," I told him. "But where is Denham now?"

"He'll be here soon," replied my friend. "He said he would go after his friends, who were helping him to look for me, and bring them here."

"But what of Cannell, Lantin?" I asked. "You have seen nothing of him in your stay here?"

His face clouded. "Nothing," he admitted. "I have searched for him, but how is one to find a single man in this city of thousands? And we do not even know that he is here, Wheeler. For all we know, he may have been killed long ago in some brawl here."

"Don't give up hope," I told him. "With Denham to help us, we have a far better chance to find him."

Lantin shook his head doubtfully, but before he could answer, our conversation was interrupted by the entrance of Denham and his three friends. As they came up to us, I gazed with mounting interest at the trio of strange companions who accompanied the Englishman.

One of them was patently a Roman, a short, sturdy man with swarthy, stern-set features, attired in armor and helmet. The man beside him was brown-skinned and long-haired, with eagle black eyes, dressed in spotted skins, quilted cotton armor, and head-dress of feathers. He carried a curious long sword, or weapon, whose edges were serrated, or saw-toothed, and the weapon gave me the clue to his identity. I had seen swords exactly like it brought out of the Aztec ruins in Mexico.

But it was the third man who caught and held my gaze. He was a figure of romance, a slouch-hatted, wide-booted trooper, long sword rattling at his heels, laughing, daredevil eyes, and white teeth gleaming behind a fierce black mustache. As I surveyed him, rather rudely I think, he smiled at me and exclaimed, in execrable English: "*Mordieu*, is this the lad who killed that pig, Talerri?"

When Denham nodded, he thrust forth his hand impulsively, and I was glad to take it. And then Denham made introduction. "The Chevalier Raoul D'Alord," he said, indicating the laughing trooper, who swept me a grand bow. "One time captain in the armies of Henry Quatre, King of Navarre and France, but now a lodger in our pleasant city," and he laughed at the wry face the Frenchman made.

"This is Ixtil, Cacique of Tlacopan," he went on, indicating the wild brown figure in the middle, and I looked at him with renewed interest, now that my surmise had proved correct. An Aztec! One of the fierce hordes who had swept away Maya and Toltec forever, only to be crushed in turn by ruthless, steel-shod Cortes. The chieftain bowed to me, gravely and silently, but did not speak.

Denham turned to the remaining figure. "Fabrius Arminius," he said, "formerly centurion in the legions of Tiberius Cæsar," and the Roman stiffly inclined his head. Then, at Denham's suggestion, we seated ourselves around the end of the long table.

"D'Alord speaks English as well as I do," said Denham, "and between us we taught it to Ixtil and Fabrius, so you can speak freely. I have told my friends that you are, like ourselves, ready for an attempt at escaping. Naturally, though, they would like to hear it from your own lips."

"It is so," I assured them. "Lantin and I came here to find a certain man, and if we can find him, we'll

take him out of here in spite of the Raider."

"The Raider?" queried D'Alord, and Denham interjected a brief explanation. "He means—*him*," he told the Frenchman, jerking a thumb upward.

The trooper laughed. "*Sacré*, that's a name for the beast! Eh, Fabrius?"

The Roman nodded, silently, and Denham came back to the subject. "For some time," he went on, "we four have considered different plans for escaping, but none has been practical. There are so many obstacles. It will be necessary to get up the stair, avoiding the guards at bottom and top. Once up, it will be necessary to pass through the city of the cylinders, though that should not be too difficult. But once out of the city, what then? How cross the ice?"

"We are talking at cross purposes," I said. "You must remember, Denham, that I know next to nothing about this place. Why have all these men been collected in this under-city? Does anyone know, except the Raider? What is the purpose of it all?"

"You do not know?" asked Denham, in surprize. "I thought you would, by now. These men, these thousands of warriors in the city here around you, have been gathered here by the Raider to act as his armies, his mercenaries, to pour down in hordes upon the cities of the enemies of the Kanlars, and destroy those enemies utterly, which the Kanlars are too few in number to do."

I gasped with astonishment. Denham went on. "You tell him, Fabrius," he said, addressing the Roman. "You have been here longer than any of us."

The centurion spoke, in a slurred, accented English. "Some things I have heard," he said, "but whether true or not, I can not say. There was a man here I knew when first I was brought here, a Persian. Before he was killed (for he was killed in a drunken brawl) he told me that once, in the city above, one of the Kanlars had become drunk and had babbled to him the story of his race.

"As you know, endless fields of ice lie around this land where is the Kanlar's city. Well, the Persian said that these fields of ice were not endless, that far to the south there were other green lands and in them a mighty people and a mighty city, named Kom. He said that long ago the Kanlars lived in this city, and were of its people, but that trouble had risen between them and the other people of Kom, *because of the Raider*. More than this he did not know, but said that because of this trouble, the Kanlars had fled from the city, with the Raider leading them, and coming north in their air-boats over the ice-fields, had found this green, uninhabited land, set in the ice. Its existence had never been suspected by those in Kom, who thought that the ice extended clear north to the very edge of earth.

"So the Kanlars had settled here and had built the city of cylinders, which lies above us. But still they planned to sweep back on Kom, and annihilate all there. But this they could not do, being too few in number. So the Raider, who is their god and their king, spoke to them and said that he would bring them men from every age of earth's past to be their servants, to fight for them at will. The Raider could travel at will through time—ask me not how!—and he swept back through the centuries and brought men by the thousands to the Kanlars, young warriors to fight their battles for them.

"There was a great cavern far beneath the city of the Kanlars, a great hollow space formed by inside shiftings of the young earth, and in this the Kanlars prisoned the men brought

by the Raider, piercing a shaft down to it from their temple above, and placing in that shaft the stairway down which you came, under the direction of the Raider. They chose from among their prisoners some to be guards of the others, and those killed in battle here they brought back to seeming life by their arts of hell, and used as slaves.

"So, steadily, the hordes here in the pit have grown in number, until scarcely more could be contained here. Soon there will be enough to suit the purpose of the Raider and then they will be loosed and hurled south to carry fire and death to the cities beyond the ice, to Kom and the people of Kom, who can have no knowledge whatever of the peril that hangs over them. Up on the great roof of the temple, which is the home of the Raider, there are scores of great flying platforms which the Kanlars have been constructing. They have made strange weapons, too, and so when their hour strikes, they will open the gates here and allow the hordes to pour up the stair, up to the roof of the temple, where they will crowd into the flying platforms, under the leadership of the Kanlars, and race south over the ice to rain down death and destruction on Kom. And thus will the Raider and the Kanlars be revenged upon the people who cast them out."

FABRIUS stopped, and I looked at Lantin, then back toward the Roman. Was this the true secret of the Raider's activity?

"But will the hordes here do this?" I asked. "Will they follow the Kanlars, and obey them?"

Fabrius laughed shortly, and D'Alord replied for him. "Ha, friend," he said to me, "you are new here, and do not know these men. They are evil, I tell you. They boast always of what they will do when they are loosed on Kom, for they know that soon they are to be thus loosed. Some subtle poison from the Raider's self has entered into them, I think. They are like tigers waiting to be freed upon a helpless prey."

"It is so," said Lantin, "for short a time as I have been here, I have found that this is so. There is no hope from the hordes here in the pit, for they will follow the Raider to a man."

There was a silence after that. Suddenly Denham spoke. "I think it would be possible for some of us, at least, to get out of the pit here," he said, "for I have a plan that would effect that much. But what then? Do you suppose it would be possible to get up to the roof of the temple and steal one of the flying platforms you speak of? Or steal one of the Kanlars' air-boats? If we could do that, we could fly south over the ice-fields and warn the cities there of their peril, get their aid and come back and crush the Raider and these damned Kanlars."

For the first time, the Aztec spoke, shaking his head. "It can not be done," he said, speaking in precise, queerly clipped English. "I was to the roof of the temple once, and know. The only way to get to that roof is by the narrow stairway that spirals up the inside of the temple. And that stairway leads directly through the lair of the Raider!"

"But what can we do, then?" asked the Englishman. "It would be folly to try to steal one of the Kanlars' air-boats, for they always rise from and alight on the roofs of buildings, and we could never get to them unobserved."

Lantin broke into the silence that ensued. "But suppose there was an air-boat hidden back in the hills, outside the city," he said; "that would make things easier, wouldn't it?"

When they assented, he went on quickly, "Wheeler and I have such a machine hidden," he said, "and it

was on it that we came here from our own time."

They looked up eagerly, incredulously. "Do you mean that you came into this age from your own time on a machine?" asked Denham. "That you came yourselves, and were not brought here by the Raider, like all the rest of us?"

Lantin nodded affirmation, and then went on to describe briefly the seizure of Cannell, our pursuit through time, and our subsequent capture outside the city by the guards. They listened, fascinated, and when he had finished, D'Alord asked, with something of awe in his voice, "And you made this machine yourselves? You found the secret of the Raider's time-traveling?"

"It is so," Lantin told them; "we made the time-car and then came after Cannell."

"God!" exclaimed the trooper, "what a chance for freedom! If we could all win free of this pit, escape from the city to your car, we could get back to our own times in it. Back to France!"

"No!" said Denham, decisively. "In the first place not all of us can escape from the pit. I have a plan by which some of us can, but the rest must stay here. And another thing, even if we each got back to our own time, D'Alord, who knows but that the Raider would come back and recapture us, as he did this Cannell they tell of? For all we know, the Raider may have placed on us some sign or mark by means of which he could track us down through the ages again. And until he is destroyed, it will be of no use to return to our own times."

"But what to do, then?" asked the Frenchman.

"This," said Denham. "We four will help Lantin and Wheeler to escape from the pit. Only two can succeed in escaping, by my plan, for more would be noticed in the city above, and we four will be needed to give them their start up the stair, how, I will explain later. And since only one or two can escape, Lantin and Wheeler must be the ones to make the attempt, since they alone know how to operate their machine, and know where it is hidden.

"If they can reach their car, they will speed south across the ice, warn the people of Kom of the plans of the Kanlars, and come back with a force sufficient to crush the Raider and the Kanlars forever, and then they can rescue us four from the pit."

"The plan is good," approved the Roman. "We four must stay while they go. When do you plan to make the attempt?" he asked Denham.

"We must wait until the night will be moonless," he said, "for the darkness will favor the attempt. The eighth night from today would be best."

"But your plan," asked the impatient Frenchman; "how do you plan to get up the stair?"

"In this manner," explained the Englishman; "we must make a grappling-hook of heavy metal, and a long, strong rope. On the night we select for the attempt, we four will assemble at the lower gate of the stair, while Lantin and Wheeler take up a position at the plaza's edge, directly under the lowest curve of the spiral stair. Then, by shouting or fighting, we four shall create a riot around the gate, to draw the attention of the guards inside. When the excitement is at its highest, and when the people around the position of Lantin and Wheeler have run toward the riot, as they always do here, then Wheeler will fling up the grappling-hook toward the curving stair above him. If fortune favors us, the hook will catch, he can ascend the rope and pull up Lantin, and the two can then proceed on up the stair, being above the gate and its guards."

"But the guards above?" D'Alord objected. "How pass them? And what of the metal floor of the temple, which covers the shaft? It will be closed, and how will they get through it?"

"No," said Denham, "for if we start a sufficiently large riot at the gate of the stair, the guards behind it will become alarmed and call for help from above. They have a system of signaling with those above and if they think the hordes here are going to attack the gate, those above will open the shaft by swinging aside the temple floor, and will send guards down to repel the attack on the gates. The shaft being open, and the guards gone, Lantin and Wheeler should have no trouble getting out and through the city, to their car."

"But we will meet the guards coming down the stair!" I cried.

"Not so," Denham assured me, "for when there is a call for aid from their fellows below, the guards above don't descend by the stair, since it would take them too long. They unreel great ropes or cables, drop them over the shaft's edge so that they hang clear to the stair's bottom, and then attach a sort of harness to themselves, join that harness to the cables with special pulleys, and slide down to the stair's bottom in a few minutes. Twice, since I have been here, there have been riots around the gate, and each time the guards above came whizzing down in that way, to repel the riot."

"Whatever else they are," added D'Alord, "there are no cowards among the guards. No one ever called me craven yet, but *ventre-de-biche*, I'd look twice before sliding down a rope into this hell."

"Yet what if some of the guards did come down the stair?" I asked.

Denham shook his head. "I do not think they will do so," he said.

"Yet if they did?" I insisted.

He shrugged his shoulders. "Why, then you would meet them on the stair."

We looked at each other, a little grimly, I think, and then there was a shattering roar of laughter from D'Alord. "Why borrow trouble?" he cried. "Take your sword with you, lad, and if you meet anyone on the stair, have at him. If you are the stronger, you will kill your enemies, and if your enemies are the stronger, they will kill you. What more is there to it?"

I could not help laughing, ruefully, as did the rest, but Lantin suddenly sobered.

"But Cannell?" he asked. "What of my friend? We came here to rescue him, you know, and can't leave without him."

"There are eight days yet in which to find him," Denham pointed out, "and if you can not find him in that time, we four will try to locate him after you and Wheeler have escaped. If he's here in the pit, we'll have him with us by the time you come back."

Our conversation was abruptly broken off by the entrance of a number of the room's occupants, who regarded our little group with suspicious stares.

"We'd best break up," Denham whispered, "for we don't want it to get abroad that we're planning something."

So, rising, we sauntered out of the room into the street. Outside a hot sunlight was pouring down from the glass globes in the roof, so strongly that one could not look up at that roof directly, any more than one can look directly at the sun. Whatever method the Kanlars had devised to collect and bring so far underground the light and heat of the sun, it was a wonderfully efficient one.

Behind us loomed the gray-rock wall of the pit, and before us, stretching away for miles to the op-

posite wall, were the masses of white buildings that housed the city's teeming thousands. And at the central plaza, the titanic, gleaming spiral of the metal stairway rose vastly up toward the black, round shaft that pierced the cavern's roof, its winding turn on turn glinting in the light like a huge, upraised serpent of metal.

In the shifting, noisy throng that pressed by us along the street, that swirled aimlessly through streets and buildings, I sensed a quality of expectation, of eager, restless waiting. Even I, new to the city as I was, could feel the unwonted excitement that pulsed from the passing crowds. And I saw that my companions felt it likewise.

A grizzled seaman in stained, shapeless clothes, who might have sailed with Drake or Hawkins, stopped in front of us.

"Ho, comrade!" he cried to Denham; "hast heard the news?"

"News! What news?" asked Denham, his brows drawing together.

"An hour ago," said the other, "the guards sent word through the city to sharpen all swords, to get all weapons ready. I tell thee, lad, it's soon we'll be dropping down on Kom, to loot it from end to end. Split me, they're going to loose us ere long," and with an anticipatory, gloating chuckle, the seaman passed on.

Denham turned to us, his face suddenly white. "You heard?" he asked. "That means that we have little time left for action. We dare not wait now until the moonless nights. We'll have to take our chance on the first night that its cloudy above, for then it will be darker here. And if we fail in our attempt, it means these hordes of devils here flashing down to make a hell of an unwarned, unprotected city. For the Raider is getting ready to strike!"

CHAPTER 13

IN THE PIT

The hours, the days, that followed, I remember now as one remembers a particularly vivid dream, for even at the time, I seemed to see all in the city around me through the haze of assured impossibility that surrounds a dream. And, although I can well understand how the city in the pit was a very hell on earth to those long confined in it, yet to me during the next few days it was a city of wonder.

There was little to do but wander through it. Each day we waited tensely for night, but always when night came there came with it a flood of soft light that poured down revealingly from the roof, the moonlight of the earth above brought down to us by the glass globes above and in the roof. Had it been cloudy above, it would have been dark enough here in the pit to chance an attempt, but to do so in the brilliant light was out of the question. And we dared take no more chances than necessary, since if discovered, we should doubtless never live to make another attempt.

So in the eight days that followed, while Denham and his friends fretted impatiently at the delay, I spent the time roaming through the city, usually with one or all of the four friends as guide. When possible, we preferred to keep together, since thus we made up a strong little company whose five swords deterred many truculent souls from attacking us.

Even so, we were twice involved in combats, from both of which we managed to emerge victorious, though not unscathed. It was a bloody enough society, there in the city of the pit, a wilder life almost than that of roaming wolves, yet it had a fierce, free charm that stirred me, at times. A product of civilization,

myself, I was thrown now into a life where strength and skill with weapons were the measure of a man, and where all disputes were settled with swords. Cooped as we were in the crowded pit, yet we were untrammeled by any form of law or etiquette, and I soon learned to swagger as boldly and scowl as ferociously as any fire-eater in the pit. And, too, in constant practise with my friends, I learned sword-play well.

I came to love my four new-found friends, in those days. Four men, out of four different centuries, and different in temperament as they were, yet strong bonds of friendship sprang up between them and myself, and Lantin also.

From the beginning, I had felt attracted to Denham, for he was more of my own time and way of thinkng than the rest. Fastidious, elegant even, in manner, and of an indolent disposition naturally, yet he was terribly quick in battle, his slim rapier flashing out resistlessly even while he yawned in his opponent's face. He was a good bit of a fop, and it was a source of constant mirth to us to watch him cleaning and patching his ragged suit, and anxiously assuring himself of the fit of the torn coat. But at all our jests, he would smile quietly, and go on with his work.

A great deal different was D'Alord, though he attracted me as much. Swearing, laughing, shouting, he was never quiet, never still, and even in the cramped pit lived with a magnificent gusto that was enviable. He was very quick to take offense, and the rest of us had trouble always in keeping him from embroiling us in some senseless quarrel, but he was as quick to forget the cause of offense, and was incapable of holding a grudge. More than the rest of us, he loved fighting for its own sake, and was so much in his element in the pit that he sometimes declared that if it were not for the lack of wine and women, he would be content to stay in the pit forever.

Some few years older than the rest of us was the Roman, who had followed the insignia of his legion over all the distant frontiers of the Empire, from Parthia to Britain. He was never excited, and never unprepared, a calm, fearless veteran, who made me understand something of the greatness of his people, who reared up the greatest empire in history, and stamped their language and their customs on half the world.

Strangest of the four, perhaps, was the Aztec. Quiet, even gentle, when not provoked; yet I have never seen such tigerish fury as he exhibited in battle. He had a great name as a fighter, even in that city of warriors, and was feared by the most fearless. He could handle his saw-toothed sword with wonderful skill and quickness, and I shuddered at the gashing wounds he inflicted with it. As staunch and faithful a friend as I have ever had or seen, yet to those he hated he was a terrible enemy.

Always, while we five roamed through the city, we searched for Cannell, but found him not. I began to think that, after all, Cannell was not in the pit, for though it was possible we had missed him in the swirling hordes, it was equally possible that he had been killed in some combat here or above, and that he now walked dead-alive through the city of the Kanlars as one of the ghastly, white-robed slaves.

But Lantin would not believe that. He searched from dawn to darkness of each day, and was not discouraged when he failed to find his friend. He did not accompany us five in our rambles through the city, preferring to search alone, and though we were fearful for his safety, he was never molested. His obvious elderliness, and the gentleness and inoffensiveness of his nature, served to protect

him from the constant bullying and fighting that went on in the pit.

The days dragged past, and working in odd hours when we were not noticed, we managed to make a metal grappling-hook and a long rope. The hook was much like a triple fishing-hook, large enough to catch on the wall of the stair, and was hammered out from pieces wrenched from metal chairs. The rope, a long and very strong one, was braided from long strips of torn cloth, and was knotted to make easier an ascent along its length. Both rope and hook lay concealed beneath the bunk of D'Alord, in a cunningly contrived little hiding place there.

So we came at last to the eighth day, the night of which would be moonless on the earth above, with consequent darkness below. As the day wore on, we grew increasingly nervous, with the exception of Fabrius, who appeared as imperturbable as ever. Finally the light from the roof waned and died, and a thick darkness settled down on the city, a darkness relieved only by one or two of the glowing red bulbs that were set around the gate of the stair, and along the nine streets.

An hour passed, and another, and another. Then Denham rose from his bunk and sauntered leisurely out of the room, followed in a few minutes by D'Alord and the Aztec. By now the bunks were filled with snoring sleepers, but as the two went across the room to the door, none of these stirred, so Lantin, Fabrius and I followed, the Roman carrying the hook and rope concealed under his cloak.

We stepped from the dark room into a street almost equally dark, the ruddy bulbs set sparsely along its length accentuating rather than dispersing the blackness. A few drunken stragglers were wandering along the street, but most of the city's thousands were slumbering in the many buildings, for few were abroad in the pit at night.

Denham, D'Alord and Ixtil were awaiting us outside, and without speaking, our entire little party moved rapidly down the dark street, toward the plaza and the great stair.

The startling adventures of the friends, the thrilling flight to the wonderful city of Kom, and the sinister plans of the Raider will be described in WEIRD TALES next month

The SHADOWS

by HENRY S. WHITEHEAD

"A fearful thing leaped upon him, a dreadful, purplish shadow-thing."

I DID not begin to see the shadows until I had lived in Old Morris' house for more than a week. Old Morris, dead and gone these many years, had been the scion of a still earlier Irish settler in Santa Cruz, of a family which had come into the island when the Danes, failing to colonize its rich acres, had opened it, in the middle of the Eighteenth Century, to colonists; and younger sons of Irish, Scottish, and English gentry had taken up sugar estates and commenced that baronial life which lasted for a century and which declined after the abolition of slavery and the German bounty on beet sugar had started the long process of West Indian commercial decadence. Mr. Morris' youth had been spent in the French islands.

The shadows were at first so vague that I attributed them wholly to the slight weakness which began to affect my eyes in early childhood, and which, while never materially interfering with the enjoyment of life in general, had necessitated the use of glasses when I used my eyes to read or write. My first experience of them was about 1 o'clock in the morning. I had been at a "Gentlemen's Party" at Hacker's house, "Emerald," as some poetic-minded ancestor of Hacker's had named the family estate three miles out of Christian-

sted, the northerly town, built on the site of the ancient abandoned French town of Bassin.

I had come home from the party and was undressing in my bedroom, which is one of two rooms on the westerly side of the house which stands at the edge of the old "Sunday Market". These two bedrooms open on the market-place, and I had chosen them, rather than the more airy rooms on the other side, because of the space outside. I like to look out on trees in the early mornings, whenever possible, and the ancient market-place is overshadowed with the foliage of hundred-year-old mahogany trees, and a few gnarled "otaheites" and Chinese-bean trees.

I had nearly finished undressing, had noted that my servant had let down and properly fastened the mosquito netting, and had stepped into the other bedroom to open the jalousies so that I might get as much of the night-breeze as possible circulating through the house. I was coming back through the doorway between the two bedrooms, and taking off my dressing gown, at the moment, when the first faint perception of what I have called "the shadows" made itself apparent. It was very dark, just after switching off the electric light in that front bedroom. I had, in fact, to feel for the doorway. In this I experienced some difficulty, and my eyes had not fully adjusted themselves to the thin starlight seeping in through the slanted jalousies of my own room when I passed through the doorway and groped my way toward the great mahogany four-poster in which I was about to lie down for my belated rest.

I saw the nearest post looming before me, closer than I had expected. Putting out my hand, I grasped—nothing. I winked in some surprize, and peered through the slightly increasing light, as my eyes adjusted themselves to the sudden change. Yes, surely,—there was the corner of the bedstead just in front of my face! By now my eyes were sufficiently attuned to the amount of light from outside to see a little plainer. I was puzzled. The bed was not where I had supposed it to be. What could have happened? That the servants should have moved my bed without orders to do so was incredible. Besides, I had undressed, in full electric light in that room, not more than a few minutes ago, and then the bed was standing exactly where it had been since I had had it moved into that room a week before. I kicked, gently, before me with a slippered foot, against the place where that bedpost appeared to be standing—and my foot met no resistance.

I stepped over to the light in my own room, and snapped the button. In the sudden glare, everything readjusted itself to normal. There stood my bed, and here in their accustomed places about the room were ranged the chairs, the polished wardrobe (we do not use cupboards in the West India Islands), the mahogany dressing table,—even my clothes which I had hung over a chair where Albertina my servant would find them in the morning and put them (they were of white drill) into the soiled-clothes bag in the morning.

I shook my head. Light and shadow in these islands seem, somehow, different from what they are like at home in the United States! The tricks they play are different tricks, somehow.

I snapped off the light again, and in the ensuing dead blackness, I crawled in under the loose edge of the mosquito netting, tucked it along under the edge of the mattress on that side, adjusted my pillows and the sheets, and settled myself for a good sleep. Even to a moderate man, these gentlemen's parties are rather wearing sometimes. They invariably last too long. I closed my eyes and

was asleep before I could have put these last ideas into words.

In the morning the recollection of the experience with the bed-being-in-the-wrong-place was gone. I jumped out of bed and into my shower bath at half-past 6, for I had promised O'Brien, captain of the U. S. Marines, to go out with him to the rifle range at La Grande Princesse that morning and look over the butts with him. I like O'Brien, and I am not uninterested in the efficiency of Uncle Sam's Marines, but my chief objective was to watch the pelicans. Out there on the glorious beach of Estate Grande Princesse ("Big Princess" as the Black People call it), a colony of pelicans make their home, and it is a never-ending source of amusement to me to watch them fish. A Caribbean pelican is probably the most graceful flier we have in these latitudes,—barring not even the hurricane bird, that describer of noble arcs and parabolas,—and the most insanely, absurdly awkward creature on land that Providence has cared in a light-hearted moment to create!

I expressed my interest in Captain O'Brien's latest improvements, and while he was talking shop to one of his lieutenants and half a dozen enlisted men he has camped out there, I slipped down to the beach to watch the pelicans fish. Three or four of them were describing curves and turns of indescribable complexity and perfect grace over the green water of the reef-enclosed white beach. Ever and again one would stop short in the air, fold himself up like a jack-knife, turn head downward, his great pouched bill extended like the head of a cruel spear, and drop like a plummet into the water, emerging an instant later with the pouch distended with a fish.

I stayed a trifle too long,—for my eyes. Driving back I observed that I had picked up several sun-spots, and when I arrived home I polished a set of yellowish sun-spectacles I keep for such emergencies and put them on.

The east side of the house had been shaded against the pouring morning sunlight, and in this double shade I looked to see my eyes clear up. The sun-spots persisted, however, in that annoying, recurrent way they have, —almost disappearing and then returning in undiminished kaleidoscopic grotesqueness,—those strange blocks and parcels of pure color changing as one winks from indigo to brown and from brown to orange and then to a blinding turquoise-blue, according to some eery natural law of physics, within the fluids of the eye itself.

The sun-spots were so persistent that morning that I decided to keep my eyes closed for some considerable time and see if that would allow them to run their course and wear themselves out. Blue and mauve grotesques of the vague, general shape of diving pelicans swam and jumped inside my eyes. It was very annoying. I called to Albertina.

"Albertina," said I, when she had come to the door, "please go into my bedroom and close all the jalousies tight. Keep out all the light you can, please."

"Ahl roight, sir," replied the obedient Albertina, and I heard her slapping the jalousie-blinds together with sharp little clicks.

"De jalousie ahl close, sir," reported Albertina. I thanked her, and proceeded with half-shut eyes into the bedroom, which, not yet invaded with afternoon's sunlight and closely shuttered, offered an appearance of deep twilight. I lay, face down, across the bed, a pillow under my face, and my eyes buried in darkness.

Very gradually, the diving pelican faded out, to a cube, to a dim, recur-

rent blur, to nothingness. I raised my head and rolled over on my side, placing the pillow back where it belonged. And as I opened my eyes on the dim room, there stood, in faint, shadowy outline, in the opposite corner of the room, away from the outside wall on the market-place side, the huge, Danish bedstead I had vaguely noted the night before, or rather, early that morning.

It was the most curious sensation, looking at that bed in the dimness of the room. I was reminded of those fourth-dimensional tales which are so popular nowadays, for the bed impinged, spatially, on my large bureau, and the curious thing was that I could see the bureau at the same time! I rubbed my eyes, a little unwisely, but not enough to bring back the pelican sun-spots into them, for I remembered and desisted pretty promptly. I looked, fixedly, at the great bed, and it blurred and dimmed and faded out of my vision.

Again, I was greatly puzzled, and I went over to where it seemed to stand and walked through it,—it being no longer visible to my now restored vision, free of the effects of the sun-spots,—and then I went out into the "hall"—a West Indian drawing room is called "the hall"—and sat down to think over this strange phenomenon. I could not account for it. If it had been poor Prentice, now! Prentice attended all the "gentlemen's parties" to which he was invited with a kind of religious regularity, and had to be helped into his car with a similar regularity, a regularity which was verging on the monotonous nowadays, as the invitations became more and more strained. No,—in my case it was, if there was anything certain about it, assuredly not the effects of strong liquors, for barring an occasional sociable swizzel I retained here in my West Indian residence my American convictions that moderation in such matters was a reasonable virtue. I reasoned out the matter of the phantom bedstead,—for so I was already thinking of it,—as far as I was able. That it was a phantom of defective eyesight I had no reasonable doubt. I had had my eyes examined in New York three months before, and the oculist had pleased me greatly by assuring me that there were no visible indications of deterioration. In fact, Dr. Jusserand had said at that time that my eyes were stronger, sounder, than when he had made his last examination six months before.

Perhaps this conviction,—that the appearance was due to my own physical shortcoming, accounts for the fact that I was not (what shall I say!) *disturbed,* by what I saw, or thought I saw. Confront the most thoroughgoing materialist with a ghost, and he will act precisely like anyone else; like any normal human being who believes in the material world as the outward and visible sign of something which animates it. All normal human beings, it seems to me, are sacramentalists!

I was, for this reason, able to think clearly about the phenomenon. My mind was not clouded and bemused with fear, and its known physiological effects. I can, quite easily, record what I "saw" in the course of the next few days. The bed was clearer to my vision and apprehension than it had been. It seemed to have grown in visibility; in a kind of substantialness, if there is such a word! It appeared more *material* than it had before, less shadowy.

I looked about the room and saw other furniture: a huge, old-fashioned mahogany bureau with men's heads carved on the knuckles of the front legs, Danish fashion. There is precisely such carving on pieces in the museum in Copenhagen, they tell me, those who have seen my drawing of it. I was actually able to do that,

and had completed a kind of plan-picture of the room, putting in all the shadow-furniture, and leaving my own, actual furniture out. Thank the God in whom I devoutly believe, —and know to be more powerful than the Powers of Evil,—I was able to finish that rather elaborate drawing before . . . Well, I must not "run ahead of my story".

THAT night when I was ready to retire, and had once more opened up the jalousies of the front bedroom, and had switched off the light, I looked, naturally enough under the circumstances, for the outlines of that ghostly furniture. They were much clearer now. I studied them with a certain sense of almost "scientific" detachment. It was, even then, apparent to me that no weakness of the strange complexity which is the human eye could reasonably account for the presence of a well-defined set of mahogany furniture in a room already furnished with real furniture! But I was by now sufficiently accustomed to it to be able to examine it all without that always-disturbing element of fear,—strangeness. I looked at the bedstead and the "roll-back" chairs, and the great bureau, and a ghostly, huge, and quaintly carved wardrobe, studying their outlines, noting their relative positions. It was on that occasion that it occurred to me that it would be of interest to make some kind of drawing of them. I looked the harder after that, fixing the details and the relations of them all in my mind, and then I went into the hall and got some paper and a pencil and set to work.

It was hard work, this of reproducing something which I was well aware was some kind of an "apparition", especially after looking at the furniture in the dark bedroom, switching on the light in another room and then trying to reproduce. I could not, of course, make a direct comparison. I mean it was impossible to look at my drawing and then look at the furniture. There was always a necessary interval between the two processes. I persisted through several evenings, and even for a couple of evenings fell into the custom of going into my bedroom in the evening's darkness, looking at what was there, and then attempting to reproduce it. After five or six days, I had a fair plan, in considerable detail, of the arrangement of this strange furniture in my bedroom,—a plan or drawing which would be recognizable if there were anyone now alive who remembered such an arrangement of such furniture. It will be apparent that a story had been growing up in my mind, or, at least, that I had come to some kind of conviction that what I "saw" was a reproduction of something that had once existed in that same detail and that precise order!

On the seventh night, there came an interruption.

I had, by that time, finished my work, pretty well. I had drawn the room as it would have looked with that furniture in it, and had gone over the whole with India ink, very carefully. As a drawing, the thing was finished, so far as my indifferent skill as a draftsman would permit.

That seventh evening, I was looking over the appearance of the room, such qualms as the eeriness of the situation might have otherwise produced reduced to next-to-nothing partly by my interest, in part by having become accustomed to it all. I was making, this evening, as careful a comparison as possible between my remembered work on paper and the detailed appearance of the room. By now, the furniture stood out clearly, in a kind of light of its own which I can roughly compare only to "phosphorescence." It was not, quite, that. But that will serve, lame as it

is, and trite perhaps, to indicate what I mean. I suppose the appearance of the room was something like what a cat "sees" when she arches her back,—as Algernon Blackwood has pointed out, in *John Silence*,—and rubs against the imaginary legs of some personage entirely invisible to the man in the armchair who idly wonders what has taken possession of his house-pet.

I was, as I say, studying the detail. I could not find that I had left out anything salient. The detail was, too, quite clear now. There were no blurred outlines as there had been on the first few nights. My own, material furniture had, so to speak, sunk back into invisibility, which was sensible enough, seeing that I had put the room in as nearly perfect darkness as I could, and there was no moon to interfere, those nights.

I had run my eyes all around it, up and down the twisted legs of the great bureau, along the carved ornamentation of the top of the wardrobe, along the lines of the chairs, and had come back to the bed. It was at this point of my checking-up that I got what I must describe as the first "shock" of the entire experience.

Something moved, beside the bed.

I peered, carefully, straining my eyes to catch what it might be. It had been something bulky, a slow-moving object, on the far side of the bed, blurred, somewhat, just as the original outlines had been blurred in the beginning of my week's experience. The now strong and clear outlines of the bed, and what I might describe as its ethereal substance, stood between me and it. Besides, the vision of the slow-moving mass was further obscured by a ghostly mosquito-net, which had been one of the last of the details to come into the scope of my strange night-vision.

Those folds of the mosquito-netting moved,—waved, before my eyes.

Someone, it might almost be imagined, was getting into that bed!

I sat, petrified. This was a bit too much for me. I could feel the little chills run up and down my spine. My scalp prickled. I put my hands on my knees, and pressed hard. I drew several deep breaths. "All-overish" is an old New England expression, once much used by spinsters, I believe, resident in that intellectual section of the United States. Whatever the precise connotation of the term, that was the way I felt. I could feel the reactive sensation, I mean, of that particular portion of the whole experience, in every part of my being,—body, mind, and soul! It was,—paralyzing. I reached up a hand that was trembling violently,—I could barely control it, and the fingers, when they touched the hard-rubber button, felt numb,—and switched on the bedroom light, and spent the next ten minutes recovering.

That night, when I came to retire, I dreaded,—actually dreaded,—what might come to my vision when I snapped off the light. This, however, I managed to reason out with myself. I used several arguments—nothing had so far occurred to annoy or injure me; if this were to be a cumulative experience, if something were to be "revealed" to me by this deliberate process of slow materialization which had been progressing for the last week or so, then it might as well be for some good and useful purpose. I might be, in a sense, the agent of Providence! If it were otherwise; if it were the evil work of some discarnate spirit, or something of the sort, well, every Sunday since my childhood, in church, I had recited the Creed, and so admitted, along with the clergy and the rest of the congregation, that God our Father had created all things,—visible *and invisible!* If it were this part of His creation at work, for *any* purpose,

then He was stronger than they. I said a brief prayer before turning off that light, and put my trust in Him. It may appear to some a bit old-fashioned,—even Victorian! But He does not change along with the current fashions of human thought about Him, and this "human thought," and "the modern mind," and all the rest of it, does not mean the vast, the overwhelming majority of people. It involves only a few dozen prideful "intellectuals" at best, or worst!

I switched off the light, and, already clearer, I saw what must have been Old Morris, getting into bed.

I had interviewed old Mr. Bonesteel, the chief government surveyor, a gentleman of parts and much experience, a West Indian born on this island. Mr. Bonesteel, in response to my guarded enquiries,—for I had, of course, already suspected Old Morris; was not my house still called his?—had stated that he remembered Old Morris well, in his own remote youth. His description of that personage and this apparition tallied. This, undoubtedly, was Old Morris. That it was *someone*, was apparent. I felt, somehow, rather relieved to realize that it was he. I knew something about him, you see. Mr. Bonesteel had given me a good description and many anecdotes, quite freely, and as though he enjoyed being called on for information about one of the old-timers like Morris. He had been more reticent, guarded, in fact, when I pressed him for details of Morris' end. That there had been some obscurity,—intentional or otherwise, I could never ascertain,—about the old man, I had already known. Such casual enquiries as I had made on other occasions through natural interest in the person whose name still clung to my house sixty years or more since he had lived in it, had never got me anywhere. I had only gathered what Mr. Bonesteel's more ample account corroborated: that Morris had been eccentric, in some ways, amusingly so. That he had been extraordinarily well-to-do. That he gave occasional large parties, which, contrary to the custom of the hospitable island of St. Croix, were always required to come to a conclusion well before midnight. Why, there was a story of Old Morris almost literally getting rid of a few reluctant guests, by one device or another, from these parties, a circumstance on which hinged several of the amusing anecdotes of that eccentric person!

Old Morris, as I knew, had not always lived on St. Croix. His youth had been spent in Martinique, in the then smaller and less important town of Fort-de-France. That, of course, was many years before the terrific calamity of the destruction of St. Pierre had taken place, by the eruption of Mt. Pelée. Old Morris, coming to St. Croix in young middle-age,—forty-five or thereabouts,—had already been accounted a rich man. He had been engaged in no business. He was not a planter, not a storekeeper, had no profession. Where he produced his affluence was one of the local mysteries. His age, it seemed, was the other.

"I suppose," Mr. Bonesteel had said, "that Morris was nearer a hundred than ninety, when he,—ah,—died. I was a child of about eight at that time. I shall be seventy next August-month. That, you see, would be about sixty-two years ago, about 1861, or about the time your Civil War was beginning. Now my father has told me,—he died when I was nineteen,—that Old Morris looked exactly the same when he was a boy! Extraordinary. The Black People used to say——" Mr. Bonesteel fell silent, and his eyes had an old man's dim, far-away look.

"The Black People have some very strange beliefs, Mr. Bonesteel," said I, attempting to prompt him. "A

good many of them I have heard about myself, and they interest me very much. What particular——"

Mr. Bonesteel turned his mild, blue eyes upon me, reflectively.

"You must drop in at my house one of these days, Mr. Stewart," said he, mildly. "I have some rare old rum that I'd be glad to have you sample, sir! There's not much of it on the island these days, since Uncle Sam turned his prohibition laws loose on us in 1922."

"Thank you very much indeed, Mr. Bonesteel," I replied. "I shall take the first occasion to do so, sir; not that I care especially for 'old rum' except a spoonful in a cup of tea, or in pudding sauce, perhaps; but the pleasure of your company, sir, is always an inducement."

Mr. Bonesteel bowed to me gravely, and I returned his bow from where I sat in his airy office in Government House.

"Would you object to mentioning what that 'belief' was, sir?"

A slightly pained expression replaced my old friend's look of hospitality.

"All that is a lot of foolishness!" said he, with something like asperity. He looked at me, contemplatively.

"Not that I believe in such things, you must understand. Still, a man sees a good many things in these islands, in a lifetime, you know! Well, the Black People——" Mr. Bonesteel looked apprehensively about him, as though reluctant to have one of his clerks overhear what he was about to say, and leaned toward me from his chair, lowering his voice to a whisper.

"They said,—it was a remark here and a kind of hint there, you must understand; nothing definite,—that Morris had interfered, down there in Martinique, with some of their queer doings, offended the Zombi,—something of the kind; that Morris had made some kind of conditions—oh, it was very vague, and probably all mixed up!—you know, whereby he was to have a long life and all the money he wanted,—something like that,—and afterward. . .

"Well, Mr. Stewart, you just ask somebody, sometime, about Morris' death."

Not another word about Old Morris could I extract out of Mr. Bonesteel.

But of course he had me aroused. I tried Despard, who lives on the other end of the island, a man educated at the Sorbonne, and who knows, it is said, everything there is to know about the island and its affairs.

It was much the same with Mr. Despard, who is an entirely different kind of person; younger, for one thing, than my old friend the government surveyor.

Mr. Despard smiled, a kind of wry smile. "Old Morris!" said he, reflectively, and paused.

"Might I venture to ask—no offense, my dear sir!—why you wish to rake up such an old matter as Old Morris' death?"

I was a bit nonplussed, I confess. Mr. Despard had been perfectly courteous, as he always is, but, somehow, I had not expected such an intervention on his part.

"Why," said I, "I should find it hard to tell you, precisely, Mr. Despard. It is not that I am averse to being frank in the face of such an enquiry as yours, sir. I was not aware that there was anything important,—serious, as your tone implies,—about that matter. Put it down to mere curiosity if you will, and answer or not, as you wish, sir."

I was, perhaps, a little nettled at this unexpected, and, as it then seemed to me, finicky obstruction being placed in my way. What could there be in such a case for this formal reticence,—these verbal safe-

guards? If it were a "jumbee" story, there was no importance to it. If otherwise, well, I might be regarded by Despard as a person of reasonable discretion. Perhaps Despard was some relative of Old Morris, and there was something a bit off-color about his death. That, too, might account for Mr. Bonesteel's reticence.

"By the way," I enquired, noting Despard's reticence, "might I ask another question, Mr. Despard?"

"Certainly, Mr. Stewart."

"I do not wish to impress you as idly or unduly curious, but—are you and Mr. Bonesteel related in any way?"

"No, sir. We are not related in any way at all, sir."

"Thank you, Mr. Despard," said I, and, bowing to each other after the fashion set here by the Danes, we parted.

I had not learned a thing about Old Morris' death.

I went in to see Mrs. Heidenklang. Here, if anywhere, I should find out what was intriguing me.

Mrs. Heidenklang is an ancient Creole lady, relict of a prosperous storekeeper, who lives, surrounded by a certain state of her own, propped up in bed in an environment of a stupendous quantity of lacy things and gauzy ruffles. I did not intend to mention Old Morris to her, but only to get some information about the Zombi, if that should be possible.

I found the old lady, surrounded by her ruffles and lace things, in one of her good days. Her health has been precarious for twenty years!

It was not difficult to get her talking about the Zombi.

"Yes," said Mrs. Heidenklang, "it is extraordinary how the old beliefs and the old words cling in their minds! Why, Mr. Stewart, I was hearing about a trial in the police court a few days ago. One old Black woman had summoned another for abusive language. On the witness stand the complaining old woman said: 'She cahl me a wuthless ole Cartagene, sir!' Now, think of that! Carthage was destroyed 'way back in the days of Cato the Elder, you know, Mr. Stewart! The greatest town of all Africa. To be a Carthaginian meant to be a sea-robber,—a pirate; that is, a thief. One old woman on this island, more than two thousand years afterward, wishes to call another a thief, and the word 'Cartagene' is the word she naturally uses! I suppose that has persisted on the West Coast and throughout all those village dialects in Africa without a break, all these centuries! The Zombi of the French islands? Yes, Mr. Stewart. There are some extraordinary beliefs. Why, perhaps you've heard mention made of Old Morris, Mr. Stewart. He used to live in your house, you know?"

I held my breath. Here was a possible trove. I nodded my head. I did not dare to speak!

"Well, Old Morris, you see, lived most of his earlier days in Martinique, and, it is said, he had a somewhat adventurous life there, Mr. Stewart. Just what he did or how he got himself involved, seems never to have been made clear, but—in some way, Mr. Stewart, the Black People believe, Morris got himself involved with a very powerful 'Jumbee', and that is where what I said about the persistence of ancient beliefs comes in. Look on that table there, among those photographs, Mr. Stewart. There! that's the place. I wish I were able to get up and assist you. These maids! Everything askew, I have no doubt! Do you observe a kind of fish-headed thing, about as big as the palm of your hand? Yes! that is it!"

I found the "fish-headed thing" and carried it over to Mrs. Heiden-

klang. She took it in her hand and looked at it. It lacked a nose, but otherwise it was intact, a strange, uncouth-looking little godling, made of anciently-polished volcanic stone, with huge, protruding eyes, small, humanlike ears, and what must have been a nose like a Tortola jackfish, or a black witch-bird, with its parrot beak.

"Now that," continued Mrs. Heidenklang, "is one of the very ancient household gods of the aborigines of Martinique, and you will observe the likeness in the idea to the *Lares* and *Penates* of your school-Latin days. Whether this is a *lar* or a *penate*, I can not tell," and the old lady paused to smile at her little joke, "but at any rate he is a representation of something very powerful, —a fish-god of the Caribs. There's something Egyptian about the idea, too, I've always suspected; and, Mr. Stewart, a Carib or an Arawak Indian,—there were both in these islands, you know,—looked much like an ancient Egyptian; perhaps half like your Zuñi or Aztec Indians, and half Egyptian, would be a fair statement of his appearance. These fish-gods had men's bodies, you see, precisely like the hawk-headed and jackal-headed deities of ancient Egypt.

"It was one of those, the Black People say, with which Mr. Morris got himself mixed up,—'Gahd knows' as they say,—how! And, Mr. Stewart, they say, his death was terrible! The particulars I've never heard, but my father knew, and he was sick for several days after seeing Mr. Morris' body. Extraordinary, isn't it? And when are you coming this way again, Mr. Stewart? Do drop in and call on an old lady."

I felt that I was progressing.

The next time I saw Mr. Bonesteel, which was that very evening, I stopped him on the street and asked for a word with him.

"What was the date, or the approximate date, Mr. Bonesteel, of Mr. Morris' death? Could you recall that, sir?"

Mr. Bonesteel paused and considered.

"It was just before Christmas," said he. "I remember it not so much by Christmas as by the races, which always take place the day after Christmas. Morris had entered his sorrel mare Santurce, and, as he left no heirs, there was no one who 'owned' Santurce, and she had to be withdrawn from the races. It affected the betting very materially and a good many persons were annoyed about it, but there wasn't anything that could be done."

I thanked Mr. Bonesteel, and not without reason, for his answer had fitted into something that had been growing in my mind. Christmas was only eight days off. This drama of the furniture and Old Morris getting into bed, I had thought (and not unnaturally, it seems to me), might be a kind of re-enactment of the tragedy of his death. If I had the courage to watch, night after night, I might be relieved of the necessity of asking any questions. I might witness whatever had occurred, in some weird reproduction, engineered, God knows how!

For three nights now, I had seen the phenomenon of Old Morris getting into bed repeated, and each time it was clearer. I had sketched him into my drawing, a short, squat figure, rather stooped and fat, but possessed of a strange, gorillalike energy. His movements, as he walked toward the bed, seized the edge of the mosquito-netting and climbed in, were, somehow, full of *power*, which was the more apparent since these were ordinary motions. One could not help imagining that Old Morris would have been a tough customer to tackle, for all his alleged age!

This evening, at the hour when this phenomenon was accustomed to enact itself, that is, about 11 o'clock, I watched again. The scene was very much clearer, and I observed something I had not noticed before. Old Morris' *simulacrum* paused just before seizing the edge of the netting, raised its eyes, and began, with its right hand, a motion precisely like one who is about to sign himself with the cross. The motion was abruptly arrested, however, only the first of the four touches on the body being made.

I saw, too, something of the expression of the face that night, for the first time. At the moment of making the arrested sign, it was one of despairing horror. Immediately afterward, as this motion appeared to be abandoned for the abrupt clutching of the lower edge of the mosquito-net, it changed into a look of ferocious stubbornness, of almost savage self-confidence. I lost the facial expression as the appearance sank down upon the bed and pulled the ghostly bedclothes over itself.

Three nights later, when all this had become as greatly intensified as had the clearing-up process that had affected the furniture, I observed another motion, or what might be taken for the faint foreshadowing of another motion. This was not on the part of Old Morris. It made itself apparent as lightly and elusively as the swift flight of a moth across the reflection of a lamp, over near the bedroom door (the doors in my house are more than ten feet high, in fourteen-foot-high walls), a mere flicker of something,—something entering the room. I looked, and peered at that corner, straining my eyes, but nothing could I see save what I might describe as an intensification of the black shadow in that corner near the door, vaguely formed like a slim human figure, though grossly out of all human proportion. The vague shadow looked purple against the black. It was about ten feet high, and otherwise as though cast by an incredibly tall, thin human being.

I made nothing of it then; and again, despite all this cumulative experience with the strange shadows of my bedroom, attributed this last phenomenon to my eyes. It was too vague to be at that time accounted otherwise than as a mere subjective effect.

But the night following, I watched for it at the proper moment in the sequence of Old Morris' movements as he got into bed, and this time it was distinctly clearer. The shadow, it was, of some monstrous shape, ten feet tall, long, angular, of vaguely human appearance, though even in its merely shadowed form, somehow cruelly, strangely inhuman! I can not describe the cold horror of its realization. The head-part was, relatively to the proportions of the body, short and broad, like a pumpkin head of a "man" made of sticks by boys, to frighten passers-by on Hallowe'en.

The next evening I was out again to an entertainment at the residence of one of my hospitable friends, and arrived home after midnight. There stood the ghostly furniture, there on the bed was the form of the apparently sleeping Old Morris, and there in the corner stood the shadow, little changed from last night's appearance.

The next night would be pretty close to the date of Old Morris' death. It would be that night, or the next at latest, according to Mr. Bonesteel's statement. The next day I could not avoid the sensation of something impending!

I entered my room and turned off the light a little before 11, seated myself, and waited.

The furniture tonight was, to my vision, absolutely indistinguishable from reality. This statement may sound somewhat strange, for it will

be remembered that I was sitting in the dark. Approximating terms again, I may say, however, that the furniture was visible in a light of its own, a kind of "phosphorescence", which apparently emanated from it. Certainly there was no natural source of light. Perhaps I may express the matter thus: that light and darkness were *reversed* in the case of this ghostly bed, bureau, wardrobe, and chairs. When actual light was turned on, they disappeared. In darkness, which, of course, is the absence of physical light, they emerged. That is the nearest I can get to it. At any rate, tonight the furniture was entirely, perfectly, visible to me.

OLD MORRIS came in at the usual time. I could see him with a clarity exactly comparable to what I have said about the furniture. He made his slight pause, his arrested motion of the right hand, and then, as usual, cast from him, according to his expression, the desire for that protective gesture, and reached a hard-looking, gnarled fist out to take hold of the mosquito-netting.

As he did so, a fearful thing leaped upon him, a thing out of the corner by the high doorway,—the dreadful, purplish shadow-thing. I had not been looking in that direction, and while I had not forgotten this newest of the strange items in this fantasmagoria which had been repeating itself before my eyes for many nights, I was wholly unprepared for its sudden appearance and malignant activity.

I have said the shadow was purplish against black. Now that it had taken form, as the furniture and Old Morris himself had taken form, I observed that this purplish coloration was actual. It was a glistening, humanlike, almost metallic-appearing thing, certainly ten feet high, completely covered with great, iridescent fish-scales, each perhaps four square inches in area, which shimmered as it leaped across the room. I saw it for only a matter of a second or two. I saw it clutch surely and with a deadly malignity, the hunched body of Old Morris, from behind, just, you will remember, as the old man was about to climb into his bed. The dreadful thing turned him about as a wasp turns a fly, in great, flail-like, glistening arms, and never, to the day of my death, do I ever expect to be free of the look on Old Morris' face,—a look of a lost soul who knows that there is no hope for him in this world or the next,—as the great, squat, rounded head, a head precisely like that of Mrs. Heidenklang's little fish-jumbee, descended, revealing to my horrified sight one glimpse of a huge, scythelike parrot-beak which it used, with a nodding motion of the ugly head, to plunge into its writhing victim's breast, with a tearing motion like the barracoota when it attacks and tears. . . .

I fainted then, for that was the last of the fearful picture which I can remember.

I awakened a little after 1 o'clock, in a dark and empty room, peopled by no ghosts, and with my own, more commonplace, mahogany furniture thinly outlined in the faint light of the new moon which was shining cleanly in a starry sky. The fresh night-wind stirred the netting of my bed. I rose, shakily, and went and leaned out of the window, and lit and puffed rapidly at a cigarette, which perhaps did something to settle my jangling nerves.

The next morning, with a feeling of loathing which has gradually worn itself out in the course of the months which have now elapsed since my dreadful experience, I took up my drawing again, and added as well as I could the fearful scene I had witnessed. The completed picture was a horror, crude as is my work in this direction. I wanted to destroy

it, but I did not, and I laid it away under some unused clothing in one of the large drawers of my bedroom wardrobe.

THREE days later, just after Christmas, I observed Mr. Despard's car driving through the streets, the driver being alone. I stopped the boy and asked him where Mr. Despard was at the moment. The driver told me Mr. Despard was having breakfast,—the West Indian midday meal,—with Mr. Bonesteel at that gentleman's house on the Prince's Cross Street. I thanked him and went home. I took out the drawing, folded it, and placed it in the inside breast pocket of my coat, and started for Bonesteel's house.

I arrived fifteen minutes or so before the breakfast hour, and was pleasantly received by my old friend and his guest. Mr. Bonesteel pressed me to join them at breakfast, but I declined.

Mr. Bonesteel brought in a swizzel, compounded of his very old rum, and after partaking of this in ceremonious fashion, I engaged the attention of both gentlemen.

"Gentlemen," said I, "I trust that you will not regard me as too much of a bore, but I have, I believe, a legitimate reason for asking you if you will tell me the manner in which the gentleman known as Old Morris, who once occupied my house, met his death."

I stopped there, and immediately discovered that I had thrown my kind old host into a state of embarrassed confusion. Glancing at Mr. Despard, I saw at once that if I had not actually offended him, I had, by my question, at least put him "on his dignity." He was looking at me severely, rather, and I confess that for a moment I felt a bit like a schoolboy. Mr. Bonesteel caught something of this atmosphere, and looked helplessly at Despard. Both men shifted uneasily in their chairs; each waited for the other to speak.

Despard, at last, cleared his throat.

"You will excuse me, Mr. Stewart," said he, slowly, "but you have asked a question which for certain reasons, no one, aware of the circumstances, would desire to answer. The reasons are, briefly, that Mr. Morris, in certain respects, was—what shall I say, not to do the matter an injustice?—well, perhaps I might say he was abnormal. I do not mean that he was crazy. He was, though, eccentric. His end was such that stating it would open up a considerable argument, one which agitated this island for a long time after he was found dead. By a kind of general consent, that matter is taboo on the island. That will explain to you why no one wishes to answer your question. I am free to say that Mr. Bonesteel here, in considerable distress, told me that you had asked it of him. You also asked me about it not long ago. I can add only that the manner of Mr. Morris' end was such that——" Mr. Despard hesitated, and looked down, a frown on his brow, at his shoe, which he tapped nervously on the tiled floor of the gallery where we were seated.

"Old Morris, Mr. Stewart," he resumed, after a moment's reflection, in which, I imagined, he was carefully choosing his words, "was, to put it plainly, murdered! There was much discussion over the identity of the murderer, but the most of it, the unpleasant part of the discussion, was rather whether he was killed by human agency or not! Perhaps you will see now, sir, the difficulty of the matter. To admit that he was murdered by an ordinary murderer is, to my mind, an impossibility. To assert that some other agency, something ab-human, killed him, opens up the question of one's belief, one's credulity. 'Magic' and occult agencies are, as you are aware, strongly in-

trenched in the minds of the ignorant people of these islands. None of us cares to admit a similar belief. Does that satisfy you, Mr. Stewart, and will you let the matter rest there, sir?"

I drew out the picture, and, without unfolding it, laid it across my knees. I nodded to Mr. Despard, and, turning to our host, asked:

"As a child, Mr. Bonesteel, were you familiar with the arrangement of Mr. Morris' bedroom?"

"Yes, sir," replied Mr. Bonesteel, and added: "Everybody was! Persons who had never been in the old man's house, crowded in when——" I intercepted a kind of warning look passing from Despard to the speaker. Mr. Bonesteel, looking much embarrassed, looked at me in that helpless fashion I have already mentioned, and remarked that it was hot weather these days!

"Then," said I, "perhaps you will recognize its arrangement and even some of the details of its furnishing," and I unfolded the picture and handed it to Mr. Bonesteel.

If I had anticipated its effect upon the old man, I would have been more discreet, but I confess I was nettled by their attitude. By handing it to Mr. Bonesteel (I could not give it to both of them at once) I did the natural thing, for he was our host. The old man looked at what I had handed him, and (this is the only way I can describe what happened) became, suddenly, as though petrified. His eyes bulged out of his head, his lower jaw dropped and hung open. The paper slipped from his nerveless grasp and fluttered and zigzagged to the floor, landing at Despard's feet. Despard stooped and picked it up, ostensibly to restore it to me, but in doing so, he glanced at it, and had *his* reaction. He leaped frantically to his feet, and positively goggled at the picture, then at me. Oh, I was having my little revenge for their reticence, right enough!

"My God!" shouted Despard. "My God, Mr. Stewart, where did you get such a thing?"

Mr. Bonesteel drew in a deep breath, the first, it seemed, for sixty seconds, and added his word.

"Oh my God!" muttered the old man, shakily. "Mr. Stewart, Mr. Stewart! what is it, what is it? where——"

"It is a Martinique fish-zombi, what is known to professional occult investigators like Elliott O'Donnell and William Hope Hodgson as an 'elemental'," I explained, calmly. "It is a representation of how poor Mr. Morris actually met his death; until now, as I understand it, a purely conjectural matter. Christiansted is built on the ruins of French Bassin, you will remember," I added. "It is a very likely spot for an 'elemental'!"

"But, but," almost shouted Mr. Despard, "Mr. Stewart, where did you get this, its——"

"I made it," said I, quietly, folding up the picture and placing it back in my inside pocket.

"But how——?" this from both Despard and Bonesteel, speaking in unison.

"I saw it happen, you see," I replied, taking my hat, bowing formally to both gentlemen, and murmuring my regret at not being able to remain for breakfast, I departed.

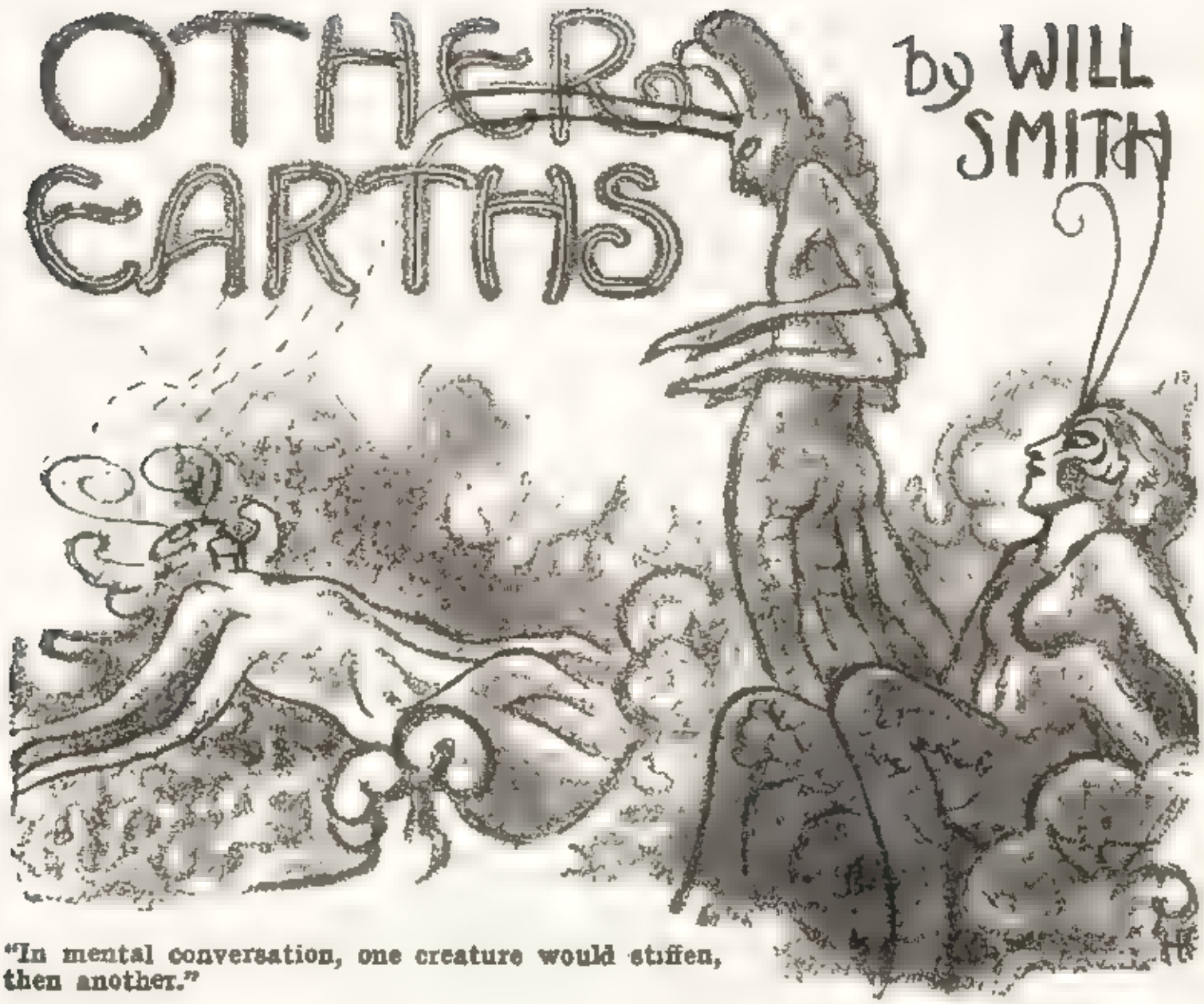
And as I reached the bottom of Mr. Bonesteel's gallery steps and turned along the street in the direction of Old Morris' house, where I live, I could hear their voices speaking together:

"But how, how——?" This was Bonesteel.

"Why, why——?" And that was Despard.

OTHER EARTHS

by WILL SMITH



"In mental conversation, one creature would stiffen, then another."

"PROJECT vision by radio!"

"Exactly," said the professor, quietly. "Or rather, not exactly; although it does amount to the same thing. Let us say I can direct your vision by radio. And intensify its force."

"Do you mean to say there is such a thing as a *force* of vision?" I smiled. Professor Noone had always been noted, even back in college days, for his rabid refusal to accept some of the established laws of physics.

"Certainly there is a force of vision. It makes me tired the way people will accept some old alchemist's theories regarding everyday phenomena and call them laws. These people—some of the so-called best minds of the country, too—never question these snap-judgment laws, but follow the old paths of science like so many blatting sheep.

"An apple hit old man Newton on the head, and he jumped up and strung off his drivel about the laws of gravitation. It must have been the delirious babbling resulting from the blow. Yet because his theory sounded reasonable, people ever since have worshiped it. Why, I tell you——"

I was amused, but I hated to have him get started now on one of his hours-long impromptu lectures. Not for nothing had the faculty of Yalcton discharged him. I had thought at the time, along with most of the students, that the old fellow had been done an injustice. In the thirty years since, whenever I had thought of him I had idealized the professor

as a martyr. But here was the reality, crazy without a doubt.

To halt the tide of erudite nonsense that I felt sure was coming, I broke in: "But my time is limited, Professor. Why did you ask me here? Of course your laboratory is bound to interest me as a writer, and I——"

"Gravitation is a force coming not from some mysterious source in the center of the earth, but from the object or substance in question itself. Newton——"

"I must meet a fellow at half-past 8. When I ran across you on the street tonight I was pleased to find an old friend, and was interested in your description of this laboratory. I was glad to come see it, but as for this idiotic talk of——"

"Newton's apple attracted the earth, not the earth the apple. If the apple had been bigger and the earth smaller, the earth would have come up to meet the apple. In fact, I'm not sure but that's what happened. The earth may have carried Newton up to the apple, while the tree went on up beyond it. Of course Newton didn't know he was getting a free ride, but that's the point. We don't *know* anything in science, and we mustn't take anyone else's say-so."

"Well," I rose stiffly, "I will bid you good evening."

"Hm-m. No, that wouldn't do. The earth would be twitching constantly in all directions, going up to meet apples everywhere as fast as they ripen. It might try to meet an apple in Canton, China, and one in Canton, Maine, at the same time, and burst in the effort. However, I am convinced—I have proved—that Newton's apple attracted the earth. Apple, earth; earth, apple—which gives us 'earth-apple'. 'Earth-apple', or 'terpomo', is the way they say 'potato' in Esperanto. And speaking of potatoes, I can demonstrate that—— *Sit down!*"

I fell into my chair, blasted into it by the explosive force of Noone's yell. I confess I was badly frightened. A raving maniac!

"Now then." The professor spoke with a cold, steely directness. "If you don't care for my 'idiotic talk', kindly refrain from questioning my statements. As for your friend, you will not meet him at half past 8. Oh, don't look so frightened—I'm not crazy, and nothing is farther from my thoughts than harm to you. You will not want to leave here tonight, that's all.

"I have one more thing to say on gravitation. This evening I propose to demonstrate something else, but another time I shall prove to you that the phenomenon of gravitation is due to a force generated within a given substance and reaching out toward the earth in the form of rays. And furthermore, I shall bend those rays for you. Can you imagine the result of bent rays of gravitation?"

I was appalled. Gravitation drawing in a curved line or even around an angle! It seemed plausible enough—as plausible as Newton's theory. . . But it was absurd, of course! Still——

"What about the radio vision projector, Professor?"

"Now you sound interested. You will be more interested before morning. Come into my—astronomical observatory."

2

ALTHOUGH the room into which we passed was lined with charts of the heavens, it held none of the other aspects of the orthodox observatory. Where was the domed ceiling? Where the circular walls, the raised platforms, the slot in the roof? This was an ordinary little square room with the perfectly common type of

ceiling. The thing most obviously lacking I missed last. The telescope!

"Ah, yes!" Noone smiled genially: "The telescope. Here you are." He motioned toward the center of the room.

Still I was mystified. All the room contained, as far as I could see, was the group of furnishings in the middle of the soft drugget. There were a few armchairs arranged around an oak library table, a well-stocked smoking-stand and an innocuous-appearing radio cabinet. It looked to me like only a place for a gentleman to smoke and toy with the ether. But there were the charts, fast enough, and that cabinet might mean something.

"Be seated, Mr. Phillips. Have a cigar or something. We will—toy with the ether." For the second time, Professor Noone handled my mental phrase coolly, delving into the cabinet the while.

"Here are our head-sets. Ah, you place yours over your ears. That looks sensible enough, but let me put it over your eyes. So! Don't be alarmed. I shall don mine in the same way presently."

The man *was* crazy, then!

"We will now tune in. Thus. And now I have my eye-phones, so to speak, adjusted. Now who's crazy?"

Not Noone, surely! Or if he was, so was I. For before my eyes was spread out a vast, bright galaxy, exactly as if I lay sprawled on my back, star-gazing! So complete was the illusion that I fancied I felt a draft of cool night air on my forehead.

"While you are picking out a star to visit," Noone was saying, mildly, "let me expound another idiotic theory. Some old duck or other—no matter who it was, for he was wrong, of course—told us that vision consists, roughly, of light rays caught on a highly sensitive screen within the eye. If there is no light, we are told, there is no vision. The rays that reach the eye have first to squirt out from some such source as the sun or an electric bulb or what not, strike the object to be seen, and bounce off into the eye—so the books say.

"I say that vision, like gravitation, originates within the object. The eye manufactures and gives off a ray of its own. Think of the Evil Eye, which is positively known to emit a shaft, baneful though it is. Light simply plays the part of a stimulant to the ray-making mechanism—a sort of catalytic agent. The more light, the more rays, and the more powerful they are. And the farther we can see.

"The eye rays, I have learned, are mainly exceedingly high-frequency electrical rays. My little apparatus catches these and adds to them the beams from an intense cold light generated within the cabinet. The resulting rays when put through a special kind of transformer are converted into powerful radio waves which are projected into space by a series of ordinary directional antennæ. So great is their power that they travel at a speed many thousand times greater than that of light. And distances measured in light-years become only a matter of minutes.

"The directional antennæ I control with certain knobs on the panel. The intensity, or range, of the vision ray is governed by the intensity of the light added, which I control with a single knob. The range is infinite.

"How do you like my telescope? Would you like to look closer at one of those planets? What about that pretty red one on the left?"

I heard Noone's fingernails rasping against the radio panel. Evidently he was turning on his cold light, for as I stared—upward, I must perforce call it—the stars grew nearer and brighter. The red star moved toward the left side of the picture and disappeared.

"The antennæ will fix that," said Noone. I heard a momentary sound as of static, and the star swung into view again. "There, our objective is centered properly. Let's move up on it."

So far, one could see as much through the regulation type of telescope. I began to suspect trickery of some obscure sort, but my suspicions were short-lived. A network of canals spread out before my eyes and every minute became nearer and plainer! Canals they were, unmistakably.

The professor began to speak, but in a voice so incredibly tender as to suggest a woman crooning over her baby.

"Mars!" he murmured. "Ever the subject of conjecture and controversy. And you and I are permitted to learn the answers to the questions of centuries."

Nearer grew the canals, and nearer. What had been only scratches across them developed rapidly into sets of parallel lines and then bridges—giant suspension bridges the like of which Earth engineers have never conceived! I grew giddy in my excitement as antlike creatures crawling along them changed and grew, until I could see them for what they were.

Men! Mars *is* inhabited!

3

TIME? I knew nothing of time. I was rapt, enchanted. Eight-thirty came and went, and might have come a dozen times, for all I knew. I was conscious only of the quick, hushed breathing of the man beside me on Earth, and the teeming life and cataclysmic sights of that world above us.

Mars—with its queer people so miraculously like the familiar conception of Wells, its gigantic structures, titanic feats of a civilization far, far beyond ours—we explored at will. So transported were we that it was perhaps an hour before either spoke.

We had come to rest directly over, as it were, a monster building with even more than the usual number of queer antenna wires overhead.

"I have been here many times"—it was Noone, scarcely breaking the silence—"and learned many things. Shall we look in the windows? My antennæ will direct our vision anywhere."

We seemed to float downward, to halt beside a great, single-paned window perhaps two hundred feet from the ground.

"The middle story," Noone whispered, "and the most interesting. Now!"

For a moment I had the sensation of touring slowly and smoothly in midair, as though suspended spiderwise by a thread. Next I was looking through the crystal-clear, foot-thick plate-glass.

How can I, with faculties poor even by Earth standards, hope to describe the myriad activities of the insect-men within? In the short space I could bear to look, I saw miracle heaped on miracle in the most matter-of-fact kind of way. Dross into gold? Easy, for these people. I saw it done in the twinkling of an eye. That was the least of their stolid marvels. It was all too steep for me, and to call back my reeling senses I shut my eyes.

"Don't!" The professor fairly screamed it. "You made me miss the most important part—the very crux—of an experiment that—— But pardon me; of course you didn't understand. When you want to shut your eyes again let me know. Just to teach you, watch what happens when I shut mine."

I had to smile, in spite of my chagrin. I understood quickly enough why Noone had been annoyed at me. At his shout I had of course popped

my eyes open. I had fixed them absently on a Martian workman inhaling—literally—his lunch. I was just in the act of wondering how the food smelled when the scene was wiped out!

In a flash what had been a vista of whirring machinery and hurrying little men became a great luminous ball covered over with a network of lines.

"You see, Mr. Phillips, you are half-way between Earth and Mars. The reason, of course, is that by closing my eyes I cut off half the optic force. Of course I can remedy the situation by increasing the cold light, but it's much easier for me to—open my eyes again."

The workman rose and stretched, and all seemed well on Mars.

"Likewise"—the scene changed again as the professor went on—"I can close one eye and leave you three-quarters of the way between here and there. If I shut both eyes and you shut one, you will be one-quarter of the way along, as you can doubtless understand by now." Professor Noone laughed, his good humor restored.

"Let's look over some of the other planets," he suggested amiably. "We can return to Mars later if we wish. Let's see now."

He shut off the light entirely, and immediately came my original sensation of lying on my back gazing at the stars. The red planet was in the middle of the heavens now. The scientist went on.

"Look them over and pick out another star. Venus over there! Going up?"

"Hold on, Professor. Honestly, this is—it seems somehow—indecent. To hang over another world—or over this world either, I suppose it is possible—looking down on its creatures, peeking in their windows, seems too—godlike. I'm afraid——"

"Phillips, do you believe in God?"

Such a question fired at me at such a time had an indescribably terrifying effect, and I tore off that blasphemous head-set. As I glared at the man, Noone had followed suit, and we sat eye to eye.

"Certainly. Don't you?"

"Absolutely. Yes indeed, my dear Phillips. How else can I account for the wonders I have seen? There must be some great purpose behind it all. But as for the God of the orthodox Bible—if you have faith in such a One, hold tight to it. I propose to show you things now that will shake that faith. Shall I go on?"

Shake my faith in the Bible? No man could do that—let this one try if he wished. Yet my voice held far from the stoutness I meant it to hold as I answered him.

"Go ahead."

4

"I HAVE to follow a blazed—or blazing—trail to get to my present objective. I have named the planet 'Ago'. The inhabitants call it—but you will learn."

I wondered why all the mystery. Once more I tried to bulwark my courage against fear of the unknown. But the journey in itself was fearsome enough.

We were bound, optically speaking, far beyond the realm of the wildest astronomer's nightmare. Just as a starter, the professor had tuned us in on Neptune.

"Neptune is the farthermost away from Earth of all the known planets," Noone muttered. "I have been amused to learn that the astronomers during 1924 made the discovery that the known universe is at least a million light years across. With my little radio telescope these learned gentlemen would find their known universe increasing somewhat. Why, see here——"

We had been standing, figuratively, on the surface of Neptune. All the while he was speaking Noone had been swinging our vision ray backward and forward, sweeping it slowly across the new, fearsome sky. With his last words he had brought the ray to bear steadily on a certain tree-shaped constellation and was now bringing that constellation rapidly nearer. Only dimly visible at first, the tree was flashing at us at such a pace that I instinctively recoiled. In a matter of seconds the tree had leaped upon us and we had passed through it. I breathed again. I had the sensation of having miraculously survived a blow from a burning Christmas tree.

In the center of our field of vision, among a host of queerly colored bodies, there hung one star of a hard, brilliant white. Our pace slowed.

"Well, Phillips," the professor chuckled, "their 'known universe' is far behind us. We traveled along at a leisurely gait until we got to Neptune, but you must know we ticked off quite a distance. The astronomers admit that Neptune is nearly three billion miles from our sun. The jump to Neptune, however, was a mere bagatelle. Our quick second jump—the leap through the trees—was something like one million times as long. Now, as for this nice white star ahead, so many million light-years away from Earth, what do you suppose it is?"

"Ago?" I hazarded, brightly.

"No. Just the second of some seventy blazes on our trail to Ago."

Stunned, I subsided.

"I should like to make all my jumps as quickly as the last one," said Noone, "but unfortunately I can't always have such a fine starry hoop to jump through and guide my jump. We shall have to go slowly and cautiously at times. Now watch the white star."

I watched, while this body never dreamed of by ordinary astronomers grew. It became a pea, a marble, an orange, and so on until it lost all spherical shape and became a sheet of beaten silver filling our field of vision. Still it drew nearer; the silver became lined, scarred, and discolored in spots. Presently it was the surface of a world—a bleak, evilly forbidding world.

Again Noone manipulated his antennæ until we got a view of a new sky. Again he located a star far beyond and brought it close.

"It took me a year to find this short path to Ago. It has been three years since I first stumbled onto the planet and lost her, and it was a year before I found her again."

Professor Noone talked on for some time, describing his method of plotting out the course. Some day, he hoped to have a system of micrometrically divided dials on his antennæ controls, so that he could make a memorandum of the exactly correct direction of any desired star.

The talk was interesting, but it had been a long time now since we had pushed off from Earth, and the strain was beginning to tell on me. How many trillions of light-years away could this Ago be? I wondered again why Noone had chosen such a name, and what the Agonians called their planet. How, for that matter, did Noone know what they called it? How could he know their language or read their writings? If he did know the name, why not tell it to me?

"Ah!" The professor's pleased little exclamation aroused me. "Now we are in Ago's solar system." And presently, "That pale bluish planet! It's Ago. Watch it."

Here was an end to the suspense, then. I was glad to fix my attention on the planet and watch it go through the same metamorphoses as had those others. But as the surface came near enough for us to make out the contour of the continents I observed that

which ended the suspense indeed. Now the world was so close I could easily pick out the mountains, lakes and forests. I spoke to my companion with a trace of pique.

"This is an anticlimax, I must say, Professor. Didn't you rather go astray in your calculations?"

"That's only the first of a number of questions you will be asking directly," he said imperturbably. "I can't possibly answer them all, so I shall refrain from answering any. You will see."

I saw, all right. I saw that Professor Noone, A.M., Ph.D., and Lord knows what-all, with all his attainments, was positively crazy. This planet to which I had been led with such a blare of trumpets was—Mother Earth!

"'Ago', eh? Well, I know what the inhabitants call it. They call it 'Earth'."

"The inhabitants call it Earth," parroted Noone.

Oh well, this was novel at least. Let the show go on. I watched the familiar outline of North America spread out and pass from the sides of the field. The Mississippi flowed through the center of the picture for a moment and then moved over and away to the left. The well-known colored patchwork of states was oddly but naturally missing, and so were the printed names. But here was something I could recognize at once—the Capitol at Albany. Down the Hudson we sped, and here was——

"New York," I shouted.

"New York," came Noone's echo.

"See here, Professor. Of course I see the joke now. You wanted me to see ourselves as others see us. But why the name 'Ago'? And what has this to do with shaken faith?"

No answer.

Down to earth we sank, to land in the very street in which Professor Noone's house stood. But——

"What is wrong with this picture?" My tone was light enough, but the lightness cloaked a consciousness of something faintly eery.

The scientist deigned to say, "Ah!"

Something *was* wrong. What was it? Up the street we moved, and in the direction of the house in which we sat. At a corner I scanned a sign. There it was: "Nason Street."

Nason Street was correct. But something was *wrong!* The sign, now. It looked queer; the lettering looked unfamiliar, even funny. As we passed on I noticed the roadway. Where was the paving? Come to think of it, the light back at the corner had been dim—an oil lamp! Where were the usual automobiles? What about this quaint conveyance approaching? As I lived, a horse and buggy!

Here at last was No. 129, Noone's house; but how queerly different! The doorway was flanked with oil lamps. As I stared the door opened, and out came Professor Noone himself, with a roll-rimmed derby balanced on his head and sporting a beautifully waxed, black mustache!

"Proff No One, of Yaleton," I gasped, "to the life!"

"None other," said Noone.

"What does it all mean? What——?"

The man rested a hand on my arm. "Let's drop over to Yaleton," he suggested calmly. "Perhaps there you will find light."

Once more we were over the housetops, and once more as we sailed along I marveled at the familiar, yet unaccountably amiss, aspect of my stamping ground of years. Dim and dark, the streets gave an impression of being uninhabited, deserted. Yet lights there were, here and there, and even the light of an occasional vehicle. But those lights that moved were so dim, and they moved so slowly!

These were not the thickly intermingling, hurrying bright shafts of automobile headlamps. I thought again of the ancient "horseanbuggy" of Nason Street.

Yaleton swung into view below us, and my heart leaped and stopped. Yaleton, certainly, but not the bustling little college community I had visited only last week. This was the Yaleton of student days, thirty-odd years gone.

The professor seemed to be making some sort of calculation. "Let's see. 1927 minus 30—Hm-m. This is April 30th. Well, well!" And to me he said, "Phillips, this *is* a coincidence. Watch the little play I'm sure is about due."

By now I had lost the power of coherent thinking, almost of wondering. Our ship of vision settled to earth directly in front of Carmel Hall, in which I remembered were the college executive offices. A lamp sputtered on a post by the open doorway, but the vestibule was dark. I was trying to wonder at the changed appearance of the place, when a wide inner door swung open, to reveal a number of men sitting around a table. I started from my chair, shocked out of my mental paralysis.

"Professor Hitchcock—the man with the beard! He's been dead for years!"

Noone shook his head sadly. "Dear old Walter Hitchcock. The best president this college has ever had. I missed you at the funeral, Phillips. I thought that of all the students, you would——"

"He wanted to expel me, and to write my father!" I had forgotten the absurdity of it all, and was actually defending myself.

"Ah, yes. I know. We shall see. Do you recognize any of the other gentlemen present?"

Of course I did. There were Professor Higgins, Professor Smith and the rest. I even recognized the janitor of my dormitory, although I had forgotten his name.

"Proff No One is late, as usual," remarked my companion. "He will be here presently. You remember we just saw him leave his house. Of course we beat him here. He is still on the train, no doubt. The other faculty gentlemen are getting impatient—as usual." Noone chuckled delightedly.

It must have been a hot night at Yaleton, though it was cool enough here. The janitor arose and opened the door still wider. The president lifted his long beard and ran a large handkerchief around under his collar. Even in my bewilderment I had to smile at what this operation revealed. As I had always suspected, Professor Hitchcock wore no necktie.

But wake up, Phillips! All this can not be—should not be. This ancient graybeard is dead!

The old president gave me the lie. He arose from his chair, glared around from one to another of his companions with his beard jerking up and down in rapid, angry speech, and banged his fist down upon the table—all most unseemly actions for a cadaver. Evidently his anger was increased by the absence of Professor Noone.

Like an actor in a play, the latter individual now made his entrance. Hitchcock strode over to him before Noone had time to hang up his low-comedy derby, grasped him by the shoulder and shook a closely written paper under his nose.

"Is this——?" I wet my lips. They were parched from hanging apart so long. "Is this where you—where they——?"

"I didn't get fired this night. This concerns—another. You will see directly. There—look now!"

Merciful heavens! I looked—I looked at Horace H. Phillips! I saw *myself* go up the steps and pass into that room of the past!

Again I was forced to laugh in the midst of my horrified stupefaction. So this funny-looking youth was Horace M. Phillips of Yaleton University! This gangling lad with the tight-legged, bell-bottomed trousers of yellow and the tight, blue cutaway coat! Yes, sadly; it was I.

"Come now, Professor. Tell me what this means. The scene is familiar enough. Professor Hitchcock, after what he considered the worst of my college-boy pranks, resolved to expel me and write my father why. He called me here to tell me, and to show me the letter, and——"

"And in the morning he told you he had decided to destroy the letter and give you another chance, eh?"

"Yes, but——"

"If you will stay the rest of this act you will get some light on that too."

I gave up for the nonce the effort to learn what all this delving into the past could mean, and tried to concentrate on the scene before me. I stood by while young Phillips got the dressing-down of my life. As he left the room I saw the younger Professor Noone step up to the president and begin what appeared to be an impassioned plea. Now he would throw a gesture in the direction of the letter lying on the table, and now he would seem to appeal to the other men in the room. Once he leveled an accusing finger at the janitor, at which the fellow quailed.

Finally, after many negative shakes of the great beard, Professor Hitchcock threw up his hands in eloquent despair and nodded. At once the meeting was dissolved.

"Learn something, Phillips?" the scientist asked slyly, almost bashfully. "Oh, well; no matter. Now as for that prank of yours, I always suspected—— Let's peek in a window or two."

The scene changed until I found myself on a level with the second story window of a dormitory. In the room was a young man sitting dejectedly before a table under a lamp. We paused only long enough to see the youth—Mr. Phillips again—place an arm on the table edge and bow his head onto it, before we dropped to a lighted window in the next story.

"Deak Johnson's room—and there's Deak," I whispered.

I had never cared for this fellow, I remembered, nor he for me. Rivalry in athletics had something to do with it, I had thought, as did also a certain 1897 flapper of the town. Still, I had never before suspected that Deak's rancor ran so deep as this.

As I pressed my disembodied eyes to that doubtless long-since-shattered window-pane, I saw the janitor enter the room. Deak rose, asked a question or two, nodded in a satisfied manner and handed the man a greenback. As soon as he was alone Deak sat down and began to write.

"The plot thickens," chuckled Noone. "We must read that letter. Here we are."

Just as in a movie close-up, the letter lay before our eyes. Deak's hand and pen traveled rapidly across it, tracing the words that damned him forever in my eyes:

"Dear Pa: My scheme worked perfectly, and Phillips has been given his walking papers. The janitor was just in to inform me his fake testimony had done the trick. Thought you would be interested because——"

Because, of course, Deak's father was interested in anything, however mean, that would result in a victory for his son over that of old Joe Phillips. I could see the whole miserable business now, and I knew whom to thank for my deliverance from what had threatened to be a disgraceful mess.

But that could come later. For the immediate present all I wanted was some explanation of the phenomenon I was witnessing.

"Shut it off, Professor." There was real determination in my tone now. "I want you to answer my questions."

Without a word Noone did as directed, and we removed our head-sets.

"What we have seen," I commenced, "is authentic, to be sure. It is impossible that it can be happening again before our eyes. That scene was enacted thirty years ago."

" 'Ago'—that's the word!"

5

"FIRE away, Professor." I spoke along my cigar.

"Phillips, I presume you know the popular theory as to how this earth originated."

I nodded.

"For once, the popular theory is correct. Eons ago a lump of some kind of matter was thrown off by our sun. That lump, after passing through ineffable convulsions and slow metamorphoses, has become what we call 'Earth'.

"But do you realize that every single thing—every brick, every man, every *word* even—of this Earth was done up in that ball of matter? Oh, I don't mean it was present in the form of a brick, a man or what not; but it was surely there in its component parts—its elements. If not from that original ball, whence *did* the things of today come?

"Nothing ever *happens*. There are no accidents. There is a physical cause for everything. Every whim of a man's mind, healthy or otherwise, can be traced to some tiny blood-vessel, nerve-end or spore of the physical brain. And those spores in their turn had a logical, physical origin. You say events which changed the world's history hinged on a whim? But those events had an immutable cause, because the whim did. Perhaps the father of the whim had eaten something for dinner that caused an abnormal—or prevented a normal—flow of blood to the brain. The abnormal brain fostered a different thought or whim than it would have done had the person concerned eaten something else for dinner. His dinner menu in turn depended on some other equally physical cause.

"The same logic applies to events which hinge on so-called 'chance' and 'miracles'. A man is out in a rowboat, say, being blown toward the rocks by a tremendous wind. When he is within a rod of the rocks the wind suddenly veers and blows him in the other direction. 'A miracle!' says he. Or 'providence', or 'luck', depending on whether the man is of a religious turn of mind.

"Pish, tush! That sudden change of wind had perfectly natural causes, and had been brewing for days perhaps. Furthermore, if the man and his boat had not been present the veering of the wind would have taken place just the same. A minute's fearless cogitation should convince the most unyielding Fundamentalist that what I say is true, that nothing ever just happens, and that everything has a physical cause.

"Now, Phillips, with all that in mind, consider what conditions would be obtaining here at this moment if the sun had delayed a minute in throwing off that lump of matter. Exactly the same condition would obtain, except that we would be one minute behind where we are now. Instead of being 11:55 p. m., the time now would be 11:54. But you and I would be sitting here; and you would be Phillips, and I would be Noone. Don't you agree?"

I did.

"If the sun had delayed a hundred years in throwing off our lump, of course the world would be a century behind the times. But it would have been the same old world—the lump would have contained its same old potential events. You and I would

not be here, Phillips, but our forefathers would. And they would be doing the same things now that they actually did do one hundred years ago. That's logic, isn't it?

"This Earth, with all its complication of different substances, really contains only a comparatively few elements. Out of those few elements all the material things that have ever been were made. That, of course, is an old thought. But perhaps a new thought is, that all the *abstract* things came from those same material elements. Think it over."

The old man paused, while I strove to marshal my frayed reasoning powers for a rout of this necessarily nonsensical theory. But strive as I might, I could not find a vulnerable spot in it. It could not be, of course, and yet—— I remained silent.

"Suppose, Phillips, that even as our sun once threw off a little package of elements, another sun gave birth to an identical package. Impossible? Hold on.

"I have convinced you that nothing ever *happens* in this world. Should not the same rule apply to the great assembly of worlds, the universe? Whatever caused our sun to spew us forth may well have caused some other sun to do the same thing. There are millions upon millions of solar systems—a fact I had never thoroughly appreciated until I perfected my sight projector. Among so many millions of suns, why is it improbable that another world—another not very complicated package of elements exactly like this one—could be born? We should wonder, rather, how large a number of such worlds there are. *How many Earths!*

"In the short time at my disposal I have already found several. One of them I have shown to you. The events of that Earth are identical with those of ours. Why? Because its embryo contained the same elements in the same proportions. But it was not born at the same time. The calendars and clocks there show the period to be just twenty-nine years, ten months, twenty-one days and twenty-two hours behind ours. Roughly, present-day events of that world are events of this world thirty years ago."

Ago! The planet I had just visited! Impossible! It was the absurd dream of a madman. But with my own eyes I had seen the proof. I had seen a world I knew was Earth, and knew was not Earth of today.

A slice from my past relived before my eyes! I could easily guess what that other Horace M. Phillips was doing now. That night, if I remembered rightly, I had sat with bowed head until long after the lamp had burned out, then crawled miserably into bed. What a prophet Phillips of Ago would call me could I but tell him what had taken place in my life since that night!

Suddenly came a new thought, most radical of all.

6

"I HAVEN'T dared, that's all," the professor was saying. "But since you will voyage with me I will undertake it." He turned to his cold light control.

What a blast of light was at work in that cabinet. I shuddered as I thought for the hundredth time of what would happen should that ordnance of rays become turned backward upon us. There would be one black flash, and then blindness. Death, more likely, I thought, as I considered the piercing power of the shaft. One thing sure, there would be no charred eye-sockets from this heatless light.

Once more I marveled at the wisdom of the man beside me. He had learned much from the Martians, had he? Well, he was not so very ignorant to begin with. It took a fairly

smart man to get an entrance certificate to Mars University.

"It was on Mars that I learned the principle of cold light," the professor put in. "Before that time my mercury vapor light was a constant——"

"Did the Martians give you a post-graduate course also in mind-reading?" I shifted uncomfortably.

Noone laughed. "I learned that simple trick at Facultus College. 'Facultus' is the name I gave to a particularly offensive little star I stumbled upon one day. It is inhabited solely by poly-legged, crawling beings whose only means of communication is through their waving antennæ.

"Just for an hour's amusement I studied the creatures. I noticed that the centipedish fellow sending out thoughts had both his antennæ tense and quivering, while the one receiving allowed himself to slump, relaxed all over, his eyes assuming that stupid expression peculiar to college faculty members. In a mental conversation first one creature would stiffen and then the other. This led me to wonder if thoughts were only another manifestation of high frequency waves or rays. I believed the inhabitants of that far-off world knew how to exercise some set of functions that put their minds into a receptive state for the thought rays. Probably relaxing all the muscles of body and brain, as it were, allowed this faculty to gain ascendency.

"To shorten a long story, my theory proved out. Imperfectly to be sure—as yet I wear no antennæ—I have developed a thought-receiving or mind-reading faculty for myself. That faculty is present in you, in all of us. Some few on Earth know how to use it."

Where was my scoffing? I could not scoff. My mind was worn out—I was tired. I remember a subdued chuckle from Noone, the sound of a more rapid turning of knobs, and I slept.

It seemed only a minute before the professor's voice insinuated itself into my consciousness.

"Easy now," he was murmuring. "You are awake, but let your eyes open slowly. Loose the force of your vision gradually. That's it. Slowly!" I heard the whir of controls. Presently, "There! You understand I had to reduce the light force in proportion to your waxing eye force. Now what do you see?"

"Ago," I grunted.

"Still sleepy, eh? Look closely."

I batted my eyes—with far-reaching results—and looked again. There was the Mississippi as it had appeared before, and the Great Lakes. Evidently the professor had again chosen to approach the world on our home side. We drew nearer.

"Well?"

Still I could see nothing to distinguish this sun-bathed world from our Earth or Ago. It was one or the other, surely. But no! Those scintillating spots!

Hundreds of them! Wherever I looked I could see them. Below us lay a country speckled over with a starry rash. A new United States!

"Aha! New! You bet it's new. Never in history has our country borne such markings. They are the proof that this is our goal. We are now at the point where I have always turned back in terror. Once more, shall we go on? It rests with you."

I dared not think. "Go on," I said huskily.

7

At first we judged the Earth under our eyes to be at least a hundred years older than ours.

It was when we were, as before, tracing a course above the Hudson and coming to earth as we progressed downstream, that we got our

first close-up of the mysterious spangles we had observed shining from near the surface. They turned out to be great metallic spheres of a golden color, covered with countless square facets from which the sunlight flashed constantly. The great spheres were mounted on individual steel towers of varying heights. Coming on a number of the things in a group high above a vast tobacco field, we paused to study them.

As we speculated as to their use, each ball, in unison with all the others in the group, began to surround itself with a bluish, lambent aura. The auras increased in size and density until the central golden cores shone through but dimly. The bluish haze-clouds became shot through at increasingly shorter intervals with forked, zigzagging tongues of flame, for all the world like miniature lightning shafts. Each moment the flames leaped farther and farther from out their auras, accompanied by a volley of crackling.

Presently the little flickers began to meet one another in their darting courses across the field. At each intersecting point a little ball of mist was formed, until perhaps a score of them were being wafted about between the towers. Soon all had joined into a blanket of black cloud.

"Rain-making!" gasped Noone.

He was right. Below, through occasional rifts in the cloud, we could see the tobacco plants being drenched in a copious shower, while the fields on all sides remained bathed in clean sunshine.

"Another scientists' dream come true," I said. "Weather control, then, is possible."

"Certainly. And another theory of mine is vindicated. These people are using an idea I have had for years. This is merely a demonstration of static electricity doing useful work. Those huge balls are nothing but electrodes of giant Leyden-jars. At the operator's will some of the nodes become charged with negative static electricity, and others positive. You saw for yourself what happened when the charges overflowed the capacity of the electrodes."

"A home-made thunder shower, eh?"

"That's it. Meanwhile, the nodes in the other fields are grounded to keep any tiny accumulations of static drained from the premises. And doubtless they radiate a mild warmth to break up any stray hatful of rain-causing vapor."

Useful static! I thought of how I had cursed the static only last evening when it had ruined a perfectly nice batch of broadcast from KIPI for me.

"Home radio audiences never think of static here," Noone said confidently. "The weather control people collect it all for their own use."

The shower below us was abating, the de-energized balls reflecting the sunlight and gleaming even brighter than before. We moved off.

"What next?" I breathed.

I can not hope to list here all the marvels unfolded for us in the next hour or two. Many of them failed utterly to register with me. Such things as pneumatic tubes for underground passenger traffic, aerial travel made safe, sane and commonplace, economic improvements shown by the total lack of evidences both of poverty and of great wealth—these things perhaps lie within the scope of my descriptive powers. But my mind is not that of a scientist. Professor Noone, however, seemed to comprehend the most stupendous of the prodigies, even anticipate them.

Why, one might wonder, did the scientist keep us so long in downtown New York? Why not hasten to Nason Street, to see how our familiar neighborhood would look after a hundred years? I did not wonder;

for I too feared, for all my brave words, to face anything touching on our personal future. I too was content to procrastinate.

CENTRAL PARK was changed but little. We had just noted this fact when our attention was attracted by a man—in costume exactly like that of the man of today—sitting on a bench reading a newspaper.

"Here's where we answer the date question," said the professor, lowering our eyes to the man's shoulder level. "Ah! Would you believe it!"

The paper was dated July 10, 1937.

Only about ten years ahead, then! And as for my personal future, here it was spread on the paper before me:

NOTED AUTHOR HOME FROM CHINA TRIP

Horace M. Phillips Deplores Passing of Old Orient

The piece stated, among other things, that "a feature of the passage was Mr. Phillips' winning of the pool on the ship's run for both days."

I was amused, elated—and relieved immeasurably. It was certain that I had nothing to worry about in the next ten years, at least.

Noone congratulated me heartily enough, but even in the warmth of his tone I could detect an undercurrent of chill, of dread. This I pretended not to notice.

"Well, well. I'll bet there's something in that paper about the great Professor Noone, also. Probably the world before us—shall we name it 'Ahead', or 'Hence', or what?—owes most of its scientific wonders to that gentleman. I'll bet all 'Hence' has been watching you ever since you announced the invention of the eyesight shooter."

The old man was silent. I continued, apparently undaunted. "To come back to this Earth for the moment, do you intend to make public your discoveries at once, or will you set yourself up for a while as a prophet and soothsayer in general? You could certainly get by either as a cold scientist or an ardent occultist."

I could not babble on forever in the face of Noone's persistent dull silence, but evidently my blather had an effect. I found myself approaching Nason Street at once.

How different was the street now from that of today, and that of Ago! In place of lumbering buggies and carefully regulated automobiles, the roadway was filled with little individual electric cycles darting at breath-taking speed. Even these, however, were regulated; for a strip of grass-ground along the center of the street kept the two currents of traffic separated. Heavy vehicular traffic was completely absent.

"Bulky commodities are no longer in demand, I judge," said Noone, "at least in residential districts. Coal, for one thing, is probably long out of date. There must be heavy loads in local traffic in some sections—where building is going on for instance. Ah, here is No. 129."

Instantly the professor's pall of glumness settled down, although I could see no reason for it as yet. The old house looked about the same as it does now. Surely there was nothing about it to suggest anything so very dreadful.

The first evidence of something wrong we found to be the professor's laboratory—the room adjoining that in which we were sitting. We had peered through the window, to look upon a scene of utter desolation. The dust of years lay thick over everything, marring the scientist's most precious possessions.

"Only one thing could keep me away from this room." The old man's voice was filled more with regret than sadness. I dared not ask what that one thing was.

As we stared appalled, a playful mouse knocked down what we quickly

identified as Noone's notebook; it lay open upon the floor, freed of dust by its fall and easily legible. The left-hand page was half filled with the professor's cramped writing. The notes, which were utterly meaningless, ceased in the middle of a long technical word. The entry thus abruptly broken off was dated Dec. 21, 1929. Two years from now!

Why had I assented to taking this damnable trip to a world not meant for our eyes?

"Let's—let's turn back," I whispered, groping toward my companion.

"Too late." Noone strove to make his tone stronger, less unhappy. "But this laboratory—I—I can't bear—I don't care to look at it."

Downstairs we found a family of youngish people just arising from luncheon. Afternoon here, then. An aged servant entered the room, asked a question and was answered by a nod.

"My nephew's family," Noone muttered. "The old fellow is John Staples, who let you in this evening. More friend than servant, too. Now I'll bet—good old John! Let's see where he goes."

Staples had evidently gotten the afternoon off, for presently we saw him emerge from the back door, clad in street clothes and carrying a long-ish pasteboard box, and signal one of the little hovering taxi-planes. We had no difficulty in keeping the machine in our field of vision and following it across the city and out over the rolling hills of Westchester. Here the plane dipped and swung out of sight beyond a massive set of stone buildings.

I could hear the trembling of Noone's hand at the controls. I knew he must be reading the name on the great central building as we passed over it. Why would he not turn back?

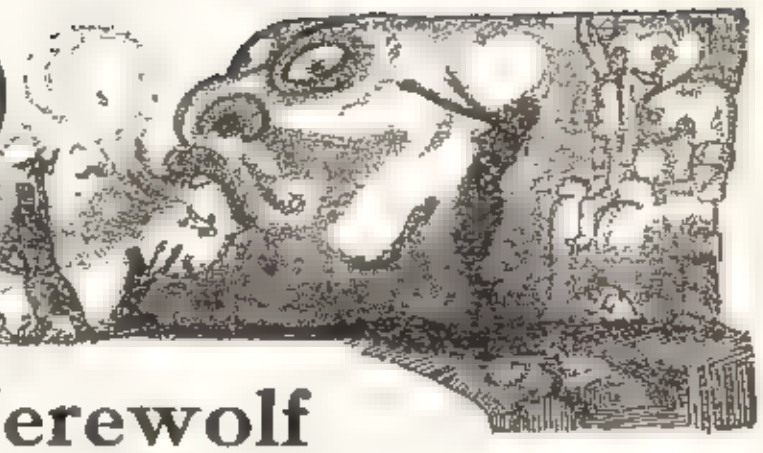
The plane we found parked in a field a little to the rear of the buildings. The driver sat at the wheel alone, while Staples wended a way across the field, unwrapping his package as he went. We followed him along a path and through the opening in a hedge. Beyond, Staples had stopped and knelt beside——

With a curse I ripped at those cursed eyepieces. Professor Noone unhurriedly removed his, and—smiled! He had seen.

A grave behind a madhouse! Such was the fate of that other Professor Noone on that other Earth! And he knew, as I knew, that nothing could alter the course of destiny, and that the same fate was to be his on *this* Earth. Yet he smiled! A brave man is Professor Noone—old Proff No One of Yaleton University.

Folks Used to Believe

by ALVIN F. HARLOW



The Werewolf

THE belief that certain human beings were changed or changed themselves at times into lower animals has prevailed since ancient days not only in Europe but in many other parts of the world. The animal into which persons were most often transformed was a wolf. In ancient Greece a man named Lycaon was said to have been turned into a wolf as a result of eating human flesh. The Greeks also said that a man of the Antcus family was chosen by lot at certain intervals, taken to a lake in Arcadia, where he hung his clothes on an ash-tree and swam across. There he became a wolf and wandered with the pack nine years. Herodotus said that the Neurii, a tribe of eastern Europe, were turned into wolves for a few days every year.

Hideous stories were told of witches and wizards who were able to turn themselves into wolves, and thus went forth to work the will of their master, the Devil, on innocent persons. The change was brought about in various ways. In Europe the commonest method was to remove the clothing and put on an enchanted girdle, usually of the skin of the animal whose form was to be assumed. Sometimes the body was rubbed with a magic salve. Our old Southern friend, Uncle Remus, declares that such people have a slit in the skin at the back of the neck, where they can take hold of the skin and pull it off like a shirt—undoubtedly an African form of the myth. Less skilful persons brought about the change by drinking water out of the animal's footprint, by eating of its brains or drinking of certain enchanted streams.

In Prussia, Livonia and Lithuania in the Sixteenth Century, the Christian bishops said that the werewolves were more destructive than the natural wolves. They were a sort of army allied against Christian people and divine law. During that century many peasants, influenced by the mania, imagined themselves wolves. There was clear proof of many cases in which human beings, especially children, had been killed and eaten by men who fancied themselves wolves.

It seems that werewolves were not always opposed to mankind and the Church, for in the year 617 A. D. a pack of them went to a monastery and killed some heretic monks. Saints sometimes had the power of turning people into wolves. St. Patrick changed Vereticus, King of Wales, into a wolf, and St. Natalis cursed a prominent Irish family by dooming each member of it to be a wolf for seven years. An involuntary werewolf could be cured by kneeling in one place for a hundred years; or you could bring either a voluntary or involuntary werewolf back to human form by accusing it with being a werewolf, or saluting it with the sign of the cross, addressing it by its human baptismal name three times, striking it on the forehead three times with a knife or drawing three drops of its blood.

A Grim Race With Death

The Gray Rider

By CHARLES HILAN CRAIG

HIS name was Lear. He was the world's greatest racing driver and it was said of him that he was utterly devoid of nerves.

For three years he had been the leader among the speed demons of the surfaced tracks, and during those three years he had won every race in which his car had finished. Several times accidents had sent him to the pits to stay—again he had been rammed by a driver who lost control—but whenever he finished the race it was in the lead.

Throughout the land he was known to the sporting public as "King Lear"—to his more intimate friends simply as "the king."

He no longer needed the money which came to him through racing, but rather drove for the sheer zest of driving. There was a thrill for him in every turn on any speedway, a double thrill every time he came thundering into the straightaway. As he raced he laughed; and he was a man who still could laugh when he had finished the last lap on the great brick oval at the capital of the racing world—laugh while ready hands unbent the fingers that clutched the wheel in a deathlike grip.

Without nerves was King Lear, they said, and there was little reason to deny that bald statement. For he was a man who went out in front and stayed there till the race was over or something had broken. No tremendous spurts, no sneaking, no jockeying. Lear clamped down the accelerator and held it there. Little wonder he got a thrill from those terrible turns, for he went into them faster than any other living man—and lived: less strange the double thrill from the straightaway, for his car was a weaving phantom when he came from the turns, a gray mist when he went into the next.

Lear was perhaps thirty-five years old at the time of which I write, and had been racing for about ten years. It was nearing the end of the racing season and he was in the next to the last race of the year when he first saw the man whom he intuitively dubbed "the Gray Rider." He had paid little attention to the other entries: it made no difference to him who they were or in what numbers—he would beat them all, barring accident.

He was on the sixtieth lap of the two hundred and fifty mile grind when first his attention was attracted by this gray rider who was to be his chief competitor in the next race.

The car was gray, not the gray which bright enamel usually gives, but a drab gray, a sordid gray. The car was low-slung and apparently awkwardly built. King Lear found himself criticizing as he swung past that car on the sixtieth lap. The man was deep down in the seat, barely showing his head, but he also was gray. And he seemed to be laughing as Lear swept past him: an uncomfortable thought welled up in the mind of the king that there was a sardonic something about this man and his car that he could not fathom.

But he swept the thought away and settled down to finish ahead.

They were on the ninetieth lap when the gray car almost rammed him, and he swung into the fence, splintering it and ripping off a wheel.

With anger in his heart he made ready to protest, but the Gray Rider had swept from the track and was waiting for him, having left the race. "I'm sorry," he said.

Lear's anger dissipated like a mist. He laughed.

"Maybe it wasn't your fault," he said, and took mental stock of the other driver.

Gray dust had settled finely over the driver's face. The hair, just visible under the turned-up helmet, was gray. Under the gray of that face there were many tiny wrinkles. The face was set as though it had come from a mold—granite. Hours of grim intensity at the taped wheel had seen to that.

"What's your name?" asked Lear. He was surprized that he never had seen this man before—perhaps some new chap breaking into the game.

"Gray," answered the Gray Rider, and to Lear it appeared that for a moment a sardonic smile touched the thin lips. He didn't like that smile.

There was something . . .

He had intended to look the man up, to ask Angus about him, but somehow he didn't do it. A reason why he should now want to find out who and what a fellow racer was didn't occur to him—he who had never given a hang what was put against him in a race.

Angus, his team manager, had come a-running.

"What happened?" he had said; and Lear had replied, "I almost got rammed."

"What!" and there had been on the face of Angus a strange expression of wonder and doubt. Lear had looked about for Gray but the man had gone.

SPEED—more speed! That was what was killing Lear. Cars were not built fast enough for him. Time after time in races he had ruined cars, driving them to the ultimate limit of their endurance till they were burned out beneath him. Wrecked many times—but he seemed to have the lives of a cat. He always came through. His god was Speed!

"It'll get you yet," said Angus, again and again. "You can't keep up those stunts and live. Take it from me, boy, if you don't quiet down on the curves you'll go through the big gates some day." This from Angus, who was continuously exhorting his other drivers to show a little pep.

Lear laughed.

But then that was Lear. That was why he was the best-loved driver in America. The crowd came to see speed, and he was there to show it to them. But deep down in his heart he knew that Angus was right. Too near—many times—was death. For now that the great American classic race had been run at an average rate of more than one hundred miles per hour the ultimate speed on wheels was fast being attained. Little more could be expected of a machine which clung to earth.

Yet Lear still asked for speed.

To see him drive in a race was to see something never to be forgotten. He always smiled as he rode: of course the crowd couldn't see that, but they knew, for the press agents had long been busy. All the crowd could see was a blur as the red car swept past the stands. But they knew he was smiling at death as he rode. And from East and West men came to watch him ride like a red whirlwind to victory.

And then the last five hundred mile race of the season—on the new board

track in California. The team managed by Angus was entered, and of course Lear was expected to win.

As the day for the race neared there came into the mind of Lear a question. Would the Gray Rider be in the race? Why he wondered about this he did not know. He never had questioned before. He did not ask Angus about it, for he knew that a query now about the other entries would serve to make the fiery little Scotchman wonder if he were losing his iron nerve. He didn't read the newspapers; he didn't read the bulletins; he never read anything. All he cared to do was race—all he ever desired was to sit under the wheel of his little red *Cannon* and thunder to victory. He never had cared who it was he was racing.

Speed—more speed! He would shatter that five hundred mile record to fragments. He would show them that his red *Cannon* could show its heels to any car ever built. And as he thought of it in his last trial spin before the big race he involuntarily increased his pace till the other cars, the fence, the empty stands became gray blurs. Faster, faster, faster! Round the curve, into the long straightaway past the stands again. Faster, faster. And then he knew instinctively as Angus flagged him in that he had ridden at a pace never before equaled by man.

THE day came; the hour was at hand—the time for the big race. Car after car drew up to the pits for final adjustments; car after car was trundled to the starting line. Drivers smoking a last cigarette. Mechanicians pottering about. The drone of a car ready to go.

The officials lined them up. Lear and his red wagon in the first tier. The others stretched to the side and behind. The Gray Rider?

Lear looked about. Yes, there he was at the outside of the first tier: and Lear was puzzled: that made an extra car in the first row—not safe.

An official was beside him.

"What's the idea of the extra car there?" he asked.

"Which car?" asked the official.

"Gray one—number thirty-one—outside."

The official looked where he pointed and laughed; said something which Lear did not catch.

But Lear laughed too. He had never been accused of lack of sportsmanship. What did he care if the first tier was jammed from pole to stand? He was going to burn them all up: win!

But as he sat there looking at the Gray Rider there came over him a sensation he never had known before—a scarcely felt impression of impending disaster. Somehow, deep down within him, he felt that this would be his last race. But he shook off the feeling with a laugh of disdain, lighted a cigarette and waited.

There sounded the last preliminary signal. The track was cleared. A sputtering roar and they were off. Round the track—a droning string of angry motors, following the pacer. A vast thunder of sound. They passed the starting line and the flag dropped down and up again.

A dull roar from the crowd; screaming of exhausts; whining throb of motors; gray film of smoke; gray cloud of dust. Speed—more speed!

Mile after mile, lap after lap—and the Gray Rider had nosed up and was running close to Lear. A gray shadow stalking him, urging him on; and he responded. His car changed from a red streak to a misty blur as he thundered around the track. A hundred and ten — twenty — thirty — forty. Speed. And the gray shadow still stalked him, lacking the necessary spurt to go around.

A car went through the fence on the death curve. Another went over

and over when a tire blew out, but by superb skill Lear and the Gray Rider missed the wreckage, went on and on. Speed—speed to the utmost!

Into the pit for new tires and gas: then back to the grind: back to the race with the gray shadow which was challenging his superior skill.

They passed the hundred and eightieth lap. The hundred and ninetieth. Ten laps to go. And on the straightaway the Gray Rider passed Lear. The smile left Lear's face. His teeth set hard. His dark face was a mass of tiny wrinkles. He leaned forward.

But his car did not respond. He held grimly at the rear wheel of the gray car, but could do no better. Wildly reckless on the curves, a raging demon in the stretch—it availed nothing. The Gray Rider was just as reckless, just as superb in his handling of the gray car.

Five laps to go—three laps—two laps—one lap, and the spring on his foot-feed broke. He could feel it go. Wide open his car thundered on. He reached over to shut off the power, but at that moment the Gray Rider's eyes looked into his. He could feel rather than see the sardonic challenge in those eyes. He gripped again the wheel, careened wildly into the curve.

How he made it he did not know, but he came out. A mere touch would send him tumbling into the fence.

At the rear wheel of the gray car. He wanted speed and couldn't get it. Speed! Down the stretch he roared like the wind, and then he began to gain, gain, gain. His radiator was even with the driver's seat of the leading car. A little more, a little more! He did not hear the roar of the race, had no ears for the thunder of the hundred thousand people mad with the thrill of speed. He could think of nothing but the sardonic smile which he felt must be on the face of the Gray Rider.

Slowly he gained, but too late! Too late! The checkered flag went down—but the Gray Rider had drawn it.

A low snarl escaped Lear's lips as he realized that he had lost. Then the snarl changed to an exclamation of horror as the Gray Rider shot in front of him. He started to slow up, forgetting that his foot-feed was no longer working. Sharply he twisted the wheel, went broadside into the Gray Rider. He heard a tremendous roaring, the clang of steel on steel; smelt the odor of blazing gasoline; felt its wrath sear his lungs; saw stars shoot across his vision; saw, too—no, felt—the sardonic smile of the man who had beaten him. . .

LEAR regained consciousness for only a few minutes at the hospital. Angus was there with him, firmly solicitous.

"Lost!" gasped Lear.

"Lost, hell," said Angus. "You won."

"But the gray car—thirty-one—beat me out just before I crashed into him."

Angus looked puzzled.

"There wasn't any thirty-one in the race," he said. "And you didn't crash anybody. You hit the fence."

"But the Gray Rider?"

"There wasn't any Gray Rider!"

"But—*there must have been!*"

Lear knew that Angus was lying. No Gray Rider! The fool! Why, look, there was the Gray Rider beside Angus now, his hand on Angus' shoulder. The Gray Rider—gray with dust, gray with sternness. A sardonic smile was upon his face, but the gray eyes which shone through the goggles held no mirth. They were cold—as death!

"He's beside you," cried Lear, hoarsely. "Look, Angus!"

Angus turned all around in utter amazement. There was no one there.

"Why, Lear——"

Lear was dead.

WEIRD STORY REPRINT

The Thousand-and-Second Tale of Scheherazade

By EDGAR ALLAN POE

Truth is stranger than fiction.
—*Old Saying.*

HAVING had occasion, lately, in the course of some Oriental investigations, to consult the *Tellmenow Isitsöornot*, a work which (like the *Zohar* of Simeon Jochaides) is scarcely known at all, even in Europe; and which has never been quoted, to my knowledge, by any American—if we except, perhaps, the author of the *Curiosities of American Literature;*—having had occasion, I say, to turn over some pages of the first-mentioned very remarkable work, I was not a little astonished to discover that the literary world has hitherto been strangely in error respecting the fate of the vizier's daughter, Scheherazade, as that fate is depicted in the *Arabian Nights;* and that the dénouement there given, if not altogether inaccurate, as far as it goes, is at least to blame in not having gone very much farther.

For full information on this interesting topic, I must refer the inquisitive reader to the *Isitsöornot* itself; but in the meantime, I shall be pardoned for giving a summary of what I there discovered.

It will be remembered, that, in the usual version of the tales, a certain monarch having good cause to be jealous of his queen, not only puts her to death, but makes a vow, by his beard and the prophet, to espouse each night the most beautiful maiden in his dominions, and the next morning to deliver her up to the executioner.

Having fulfilled this vow for many years to the letter, and with a religious punctuality and method that conferred great credit upon him as a man of devout feeling and excellent sense, he was interrupted one afternoon (no doubt at his prayers) by a visit from his grand vizier, to whose daughter, it appears, there had occurred an idea.

Her name was Scheherazade, and her idea was, that she would either redeem the land from the depopulating tax upon its beauty, or perish, after the approved fashion of all heroines, in the attempt.

Accordingly, and although we do not find it to be leap-year (which makes the sacrifice more meritorious), she deputes her father, the grand vizier, to make an offer to the king of her hand. This hand the king eagerly accepts—(he had intended to take it at all events, and had put off the matter from day to day, only through fear of the vizier),—but, in accepting it now, he gives all parties very distinctly to understand, that, grand vizier or no grand vizier, he has not the slightest design of giving up one iota of his vow or of his privileges. When, therefore, the fair Scheherazade insisted upon marrying the king, and did actually marry him despite her father's excellent advice not to do anything of the kind—when she would and did marry him, I say, will

I, nill I, it was with her beautiful black eyes as thoroughly open as the nature of the case would allow.

It seems, however, that this politic damsel (who had been reading Machiavelli, beyond doubt) had a very ingenious little plot in her mind. On the night of the wedding, she contrived, upon I forget what specious pretense, to have her sister occupy a couch sufficiently near that of the royal pair to admit of easy conversation from bed to bed; and, a little before cock-crowing, she took care to awaken the good monarch, her husband (who bore her none the worse will because he intended to wring her neck on the morrow),—she managed to awaken him, I say, (although on account of a capital conscience, and an easy digestion, he slept well) by the profound interest of a story (about a rat and a black cat, I think) which she was narrating (all in an undertone, of course) to her sister. When the day broke, it so happened that this history was not altogether finished, and that Scheherazade, in the nature of things, could not finish it just then, since it was high time for her to get up and be bowstrung—a thing very little more pleasant than hanging, only a trifle more genteel!

The king's curiosity, however, prevailing, I am sorry to say, even over his sound religious principles, induced him for this once to postpone the fulfilment of his vow until next morning, for the purpose and with the hope of hearing that night how it fared in the end with the black cat (a black cat, I think it was) and the rat.

The night having arrived, however, the lady Scheherazade not only put the finishing stroke to the black cat and the rat (the rat was blue), but before she well knew what she was about, found herself deep in the intricacies of a narration, having reference (if I am not altogether mistaken) to a pink horse (with green wings) that went, in a violent manner, by clockwork, and was wound up with an indigo key. With this history the king was even more profoundly interested than with the other—and, as the day broke before its conclusion (notwithstanding all the queen's endeavors to get through with it in time for the bowstringing), there was again no resource but to postpone that ceremony as before, for twenty-four hours. The next night there happened a similar accident with a similar result; and then the next—and then again the next; so that, in the end, the good monarch, having been unavoidably deprived of all opportunity to keep his vow during a period of no less than one thousand and one nights, either forgets it altogether by the expiration of this time, or gets himself absolved of it in the regular way, or (what is more probable) breaks it outright, as well as the head of his father confessor. At all events, Scheherazade triumphed, and the tariff upon beauty was repealed.

"My dear sister," said she, on the thousand-and-second night (I quote the language of the *Isitsöornot* at this point, verbatim), "my dear sister," said she, "now that all this little difficulty about the bowstring has blown over, and that this odious tax is so happily repealed, I feel that I have been guilty of great indiscretion in withholding from you and the king (who, I am sorry to say, snores—a thing no gentleman would do) the full conclusion of the story of Sinbad the sailor. This person went through numerous other and more interesting adventures than those which I related; but the truth is, I felt sleepy on the particular night of their narration, and so was seduced into cutting them short—a grievous piece of misconduct, for which I only trust

that Allah will forgive me. But even yet it is not too late to remedy my great neglect—and as soon as I have given the king a pinch or two in order to wake him up so far that he may stop making that horrible noise, I will forthwith entertain you (and him if he pleases) with the sequel of this very remarkable story."

Hereupon the sister of Scheherazade, as I have it from the *Isitsöornot*, expressed no very particular intensity of gratification; but the king, having been sufficiently pinched, at length ceased snoring, and finally said, "Hum!" and then "Hoo!" when the queen, understanding these words (which are no doubt Arabic) to signify that he was all attention, and would do his best not to snore any more—the queen, I say, having arranged these matters to her satisfaction, re-entered thus, at once, into the history of Sinbad the sailor:

"AT LENGTH, in my old age" [these are the words of Sinbad himself, as retailed by Scheherazade]—"at length, in my old age, and after enjoying many years of tranquillity at home, I became once more possessed of a desire of visiting foreign countries; and one day, without acquainting any of my family with my design, I packed up some bundles of such merchandise as was most precious and least bulky, and, engaging a porter to carry them, went with him down to the sea-shore, to await the arrival of any chance vessel that might convey me out of the kingdom into some region which I had not as yet explored.

"Having deposited the packages upon the sands, we sat down beneath some trees, and looked out into the ocean in the hope of perceiving a ship, but during several hours we saw none whatever. At length I fancied that I could hear a singular buzzing or humming sound—and the porter, after listening awhile, declared that he also could distinguish it. Presently it grew louder, and then still louder, so that we could have no doubt that the object which caused it was approaching us. At length, on the edge of the horizon, we discovered a black speck, which rapidly increased in size until we made it out to be a vast monster, swimming with a great part of its body above the surface of the sea. It came toward us with inconceivable swiftness, throwing up huge waves of foam around its breast, and illuminating all that part of the sea through which it passed, with a long line of fire that extended far off into the distance.

"As the thing drew near we saw it very distinctly. Its length was equal to that of three of the loftiest trees that grow, and it was as wide as the great hall of audience in your palace, O most sublime and munificent of the califs. Its body, which was unlike that of ordinary fishes, was as solid as a rock, and of a jetty blackness throughout all that portion of it which floated above the water with the exception of a narrow blood-red streak that completely begirdled it. The belly, which floated beneath the surface, and of which we could get only a glimpse now and then as the monster rose and fell with the billows, was entirely covered with metallic scales, of a color like that of the moon in misty weather. The back was flat and nearly white, and from it there extended upwards of six spines, about half the length of the whole body.

"This horrible creature had no mouth that we could perceive; but, as if to make up for this deficiency, it was provided with at least four score of eyes, that protruded from their sockets like those of the green dragon-fly, and were arranged all around the body in two rows, one above the other, and parallel to the blood-red streak, which seemed to answer the

purpose of an eyebrow. Two or three of these dreadful eyes were much larger than the others, and had the appearance of solid gold.

"Although this beast approached us, as I have before said, with the greatest rapidity, it must have been moved altogether by necromancy—for it had neither fins like a fish nor web-feet like a duck, nor wings like the seashell which is blown along in the manner of a vessel; nor yet did it writhe itself forward as do the eels. Its head and its tail were shaped precisely alike, only, not far from the latter, were two small holes that served for nostrils, and through which the monsted puffed its thick breath with prodigious violence, and with a shrieking, disagreeable noise.

"Our terror at beholding this hideous thing was very great, but it was even surpassed by our astonishment, when upon getting a nearer look, we perceived upon the creature's back a vast number of animals about the size and shape of men, and altogether much resembling them, except that they wore no garments (as men do), being supplied (by nature, no doubt), with an ugly, uncomfortable covering, a good deal like cloth, but fitting so tight to the skin, as to render the poor wretches laughably awkward, and put them apparently to severe pain. On the very tips of their heads were certain square-looking boxes, which, at first sight, I thought might have been intended to answer as turbans, but I soon discovered that they were excessively heavy and solid, and I therefore concluded they were contrivances designed, by their great weight, to keep the heads of the animals steady and safe upon their shoulders. Around the necks of the creatures were fastened black collars (badges of servitude, no doubt), such as we keep on our dogs, only much wider and infinitely stiffer—so that it was quite impossible for these poor victims to move their heads in any direction without moving the body at the same time; and thus they were doomed to perpetual contemplation of their noses—a view puggish and snubby in a wonderful if not positively in an awful degree.

"When the monster had nearly reached the shore where we stood, it suddenly pushed out one of its eyes to a great extent, and emitted from it a terrible flash of fire, accompanied by a dense cloud of smoke, and a noise that I can compare to nothing but thunder. As the smoke cleared away, we saw one of the odd man-animals standing near the head of the large beast with a trumpet in his hand, through which (putting it to his mouth) he presently addressed us in loud, harsh, and disagreeable accents, that, perhaps, we should have mistaken for language had they not come altogether through the nose.

"Being thus evidently spoken to, I was at a loss how to reply, as I could in no manner understand what was said; and in this difficulty I turned to the porter, who was near swooning through affright, and demanded of him his opinion as to what species of monster it was, what it wanted, and what kind of creatures those were that so swarmed upon its back. To this the porter replied, as well as he could for trepidation, that he had once before heard of this sea-beast; that it was a cruel demon, with bowels of sulfur and blood of fire, created by evil genii as the means of inflicting misery upon mankind; that the things upon its back were vermin, such as sometimes infest cats and dogs, only a little larger and more savage; and that these vermin had their uses, however evil—for, through the torture they caused the beast by their nibblings and stingings, it was goaded into that degree of wrath which was requisite to make it roar and commit ill, and so fulfil the vengeful and malicious designs of the wicked genii.

"This account determined me to take to my heels, and, without notice even looking behind me, I ran at full speed up into the hills, while the porter ran equally fast, although nearly in an opposite direction, so that, by these means, he finally made his escape with my bundles, of which I have no doubt he took excellent care—although this is a point I can not determine, as I do not remember that I ever beheld him again.

"For myself, I was so hotly pursued by a swarm of the men-vermin (who had come to the shore in boats) that I was very soon overtaken, bound hand and foot, and conveyed to the beast, which immediately swam out again into the middle of the sea.

"I now bitterly repented my folly in quitting a comfortable home to peril my life in such adventures as this; but regret being useless, I made the best of my condition, and exerted myself to secure the good-will of the man-animal that owned the trumpet, and who appeared to exercise authority over his fellows. I succeeded so well in this endeavor that, in a few days, the creature bestowed upon me various tokens of his favor, and in the end even went to the trouble of teaching me the rudiments of what it was vain enough to denominate its language; so that, at length, I was enabled to converse with it readily, and came to make it comprehend the ardent desire I had of seeing the world.

"'*Washish, squashish, squeak, Sinbad, hey diddle diddle, grunt unt grumble, hiss, fiss, whiss,*' said he to me, one day after dinner—but I beg a thousand pardons, I had forgotten that your majesty is not conversant with the dialect of the Cock-neighs (so the man-animals were called; I presume because their language formed the connecting link between that of the horse and that of the rooster). With your permission, I will translate. '*Washish squashish,*' and so forth:—that is to say, 'I am happy to find, my dear Sinbad, that you are really a very excellent fellow; we are now about doing a thing which is called circumnavigating the globe; and since you are so desirous of seeing the world, I will strain a point and give you a free passage on the back of the beast.'"

When the lady Scheherazade had proceeded thus far, relates the *Isitsöornot*, the king turned over from his left side to his right, and said:

"It is, in fact, *very* surprizing, my dear queen, that you omitted, hitherto, these later adventures of Sinbad. Do you know I think them exceedingly entertaining and strange?"

The king having thus expressed himself, we are told, the fair Scheherazade resumed her history in the following words:

"Sinbad went on in this manner with his narrative—'I thanked the man-animal for its kindness, and soon found myself very much at home on the beast, which swam at a prodigious rate through the ocean; although the surface of the latter is, in that part of the world, by no means flat, but round like a pomegranate, so that we went—so to say—either up hill or down hill all the time.'"

"That, I think, was very singular," interrupted the king.

"Nevertheless, it is quite true," replied Scheherazade.

"I have my doubts," rejoined the king; "but, pray, be so good as to go on with the story."

"I will," said the queen. "'The beast,' continued Sinbad, 'swam, as I have related, up hill and down hill, until, at length, we arrived at an island, many hundreds of miles in circumference, but which, nevertheless, had been built in the middle of the sea by a colony of little things like caterpillars.'"[1]

[1] The coralites.

"Hum!" said the king.

" 'Leaving this island,' said Sinbad —(for Scheherazade, it must be understood, took no notice of her husband's ill-mannered ejaculation)— 'leaving this island, we came to another where the forests were of solid stone, and so hard that they shivered to pieces the finest-tempered axes with which we endeavored to cut them down.' "[1]

"Hum!" said the king, again; but Scheherazade, paying him no attention, continued in the language of Sinbad.

"Passing beyond this last island, we reached a country where there was a cave that ran to the distance of thirty or forty miles within the bowels of the earth, and that contained a greater number of far more spacious and more magnificent palaces than are to be found in all Damascus and Bagdad. From the roofs of these palaces there hung myriads of gems, like diamonds, but larger than men; and in among the streets of towers and pyramids and temples, there flowed immense rivers as black as ebony, and swarming with fish that had no eyes."[2]

"Hum!" said the king.

"We then swam into a region of the sea where we found a lofty mountain, down whose sides there streamed torrents of melted metal, some of which were twelve miles wide and sixty miles long;[3] while from an abyss on the summit issued so vast a quantity of ashes that the sun was entirely blotted out from the heavens, and it became darker than the darkest midnight; so that when we were even at the distance of a hundred and fifty miles long;[3] while from an abyss possible to see the whitest object, however close we held it to our eyes."[4]

"Hum!" said the king.

"After quitting this coast, the beast continued his voyage until we met with a land in which the nature of things seemed reversed—for we here saw a great lake, at the bottom of which, more than a hundred feet beneath the surface of the water, there flourished in full leaf a forest of tall and luxuriant trees."[5]

"Hoo!" said the king.

"Some hundred miles farther on brought us to a climate where the atmosphere was so dense as to sustain iron or steel, just as our own does feather."[6]

"Fiddle de dee," said the king.

"Proceeding still in the same direction, we presently arrived at the most magnificent region in the whole world. Through it there meandered a glorious river for several thousands of miles. This river was of unspeakable depth, and of a transparency richer than that of amber. It was from three to six miles in width; and its banks, which rose on either side to twelve hundred feet in perpendicular height, were crowned with ever-blooming trees, and perpetual sweet-scented flowers, that made the whole territory one gorgeous garden; but the name of this luxuriant land was the Kingdom of Horror, and to enter it was inevitable death."[7]

"Humph!" said the king.

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[1] One of the most remarkable natural curiosities in Texas is a petrified forest, near the head of Pasigno river. It consists of several hundred trees, in an erect position, all turned to stone.

[2] The Mammoth Cave of Kentucky.

[3] In Iceland, 1783.

[4] During the eruption of Hecla, in 1766, clouds of this kind produced such a degree of darkness that, at Glaumba, which is more than fifty leagues from the mountain, people could only find their way by groping.

[5] In 1790, in the Caraccas during an earthquake a portion of the granite soil sank and left a lake eight hundred yards in diameter, and from eighty to a hundred feet deep. It was a part of the forest of Aripao which sank, and the trees remained green for several months under the water.

[6] The hardest steel ever manufactured may, under the action of a blow-pipe, be reduced to an impalpable powder, which will float readily in the atmospheric air.

[7] The region of the Niger.

"We left this kingdom in great haste, and, after some days, came to another, where we were astonished to perceive myriads of monstrous animals with horns resembling scythes upon their heads. These hideous beasts dig for themselves vast caverns in the soil, of a funnel shape, and line the sides of them with rocks, so disposed one upon the other that they fall instantly, when trodden upon by other animals, thus precipitating them into the monster's dens, where their blood is immediately sucked, and their carcasses afterwards hurled contemptuously out to an immense distance from the caverns of death."[1]

"Pooh!" said the king.

"Continuing our progress, we perceived a district with vegetables that grew not upon any soil, but in the air.[2] There were others that sprang from the substance of other vegetables;[3] others that derived their substance from the bodies of living animals;[4] and then again, there were others that glowed all over with intense fire;[5] and others that moved from place to place at pleasure,[6] and what was still more wonderful, we discovered flowers that lived and breathed and moved their limbs at will, and had, moreover, the detestable passion of mankind for enslaving other creatures, and confining them in horrid and solitary prisons until the fulfilment of appointed tasks."[7]

"Pshaw!" said the king.

"Quitting this land, we soon arrived at another in which the bees and the birds are mathematicians of two very difficult problems, they give daily instruction in the science of geometry to the wise men of the empire. The king of the place having offered a reward for the solution of two very difficult problems, they were solved upon the spot—the one by the bees, and the other by the birds; but the king keeping their solution a secret, it was only after the most profound researches and labor, and the writing of an infinity of big books, during a long series of years, that the men-mathematicians at length arrived at the identical solutions which had been given upon the spot by the bees and by the birds."[8]

"Oh my!" said the king.

"We had scarcely lost sight of this empire when we found ourselves close upon another, from whose shores there flew over our heads a flock of fowls a mile in breadth, and two hundred and forty miles long; so that, although they flew a mile dur-

[1] The *Myrmeleon*—lion-ant. The term "monster" is equally applicable to small abnormal things and to great, while such epithets as "vast" are merely comparative. The cavern of the myrmeleon is *vast* in comparison with the hole of the common red ant. The grain of silex is also a "rock."

[2] The *Epidendron, Flos aeris,* of the family of the *Orchideae,* grows with merely the surface of its roots attached to a tree or other object, from which it derives no nutriment—subsisting altogether upon air.

[3] The *Parasites,* such as the wonderful *Rafflesia arnaldii.*

[4] The *Hotte,* a decided caterpillar, or worm, is found growing at the foot of the *Rata* tree, with a plant growing out of its head.

[5] In mines and natural caves we find a species of cryptogamous fungus that emits an intense phosphorescence.

[6] The orchis, scabius and valisneria.

[7] *Aristolochia Clematitis.*

[8] The bees construct their cells with just such sides, in just such number, and at just such inclinations, as it has been demonstrated (in a problem involving the profoundest mathematical principles) are the very sides, in the very number, and at the very angles, which will afford the creatures the most room that is compatible with the greatest stability of structure.

During the latter part of the 18th century, the question arose among mathematicians—"to determine the best form that can be given to the sails of a windmill, according to their varying distances from the revolving vanes, and likewise from the centers of the revolution." This is an excessively complex problem, for it is, in other words, to find the best possible position at an infinity of varied distances, and at an infinity of points on the arm. There were a thousand futile attempts to answer the query on the part of the most illustrious mathematicians; and when, at length, an undeniable solution was discovered, men found that the wings of a bird had given it with absolute precision ever since the first bird had traversed the air.

ing every minute, it required no less than four hours for the whole flock to pass over us—in which there were several millions of millions of fowl.'"[1]

"Oh fy!" said the king.

"No sooner had we got rid of these birds, which occasioned us great annoyance, than we were terrified by the appearance of a fowl of another kind, and infinitely larger than even the rocs which I met in my former voyages; for it was bigger than the biggest of the domes on your seraglio, O most Munificent of Califs. This terrible fowl had no head that we could perceive, but was fashioned entirely of belly, which was of a prodigious fatness and roundness, of a soft-looking substance, smooth, shining and striped with various colors. In its talons, the monster was bearing away to its eyrie in the heavens, a house from which it had knocked off the roof, and in the interior of which we distinctly saw human beings, who, beyond doubt, were in a state of frightful despair at the horrible fate which awaited them. We shouted with all our might, in the hope of frightening the bird into letting go of its prey; but it merely gave a snort or puff, as if of rage, and then let fall upon our heads a heavy sack which proved to be filled with sand!"

"Stuff!" said the king.

"It was just after this adventure that we encountered a continent of immense extent and prodigious solidity, but which, nevertheless, was supported entirely upon the back of a sky-blue cow that had no fewer than four hundred horns.'"[2]

"*That*, now, I believe," said the king, because I have read something of the kind before, in a book."

"We passed immediately beneath this continent, swimming in between the legs of the cow, and, after some hours, found ourselves in a wonderful country indeed, which, I was informed by the man-animal, was his own native land, inhabited by things of his own species. This elevated the man-animal very much in my esteem, and in fact I now began to feel ashamed of the contemptuous familiarity with which I had treated him; for I found that the man-animals in general were a nation of the most powerful magicians, who lived with worms in tseir brains,[3] which, no doubt, served to stimulate them by their painful writhings and wrigglings to the most miraculous efforts of imagination."

"Nonsense!" said the king.

"Among the magicians were domesticated several animals of very singular kinds; for example, there was a huge horse whose bones were iron and whose blood was boiling water. In place of corn, he had black stones for his usual food; and yet, in spite of so hard a diet, he was so strong and swift that he could drag a load more weighty than the grandest temple in this city, at a rate surpassing that of the flight of most birds."

"Twattle!" said the king.

"I saw, also, among these people a hen without feathers, but bigger than a camel; instead of flesh she had iron and brick; her blood, like that of the horse (to whom, in fact, she was nearly related), was boiling water; and like him she ate nothing but wood or black stones. This hen brought forth very frequently a hundred chickens in a day; and, after birth, they took up their residence for sev-

[1] "He observed a flock of pigeons passing betwixt Frankfort and the Indian territory, one mile at least in breadth; it took up four hours in passing; which, at the rate of one mile per minute, gives a length of 240 miles; and, supposing three pigeons to each square yard, gives 2,230,272,000 pigeons."—*Travels in Canada and the United States*, by Lieut. F. Hall.

[2] "The earth is upheld by a cow of a blue color, having horns four hundred in number."—*Sale's Koran.*

[3] The *Entozoa*, or intestinal worms, have repeatedly been observed in the muscles, and in the cerebral substance of men.

eral weeks within the stomach of their mother."

"Fal lal!" said the king.

"One of this nation of mighty conjurors created a man out of brass and wood and leather, and endowed him with such ingenuity that he would have beaten at chess all the race of mankind with the exception of the great Calif, Haroun Alraschid.[1] Another of these magi constructed (of like material) a creature that put to shame even the genius of him who made it; for so great were its reasoning powers that, in a second, it performed calculations of so vast an extent that they would have required the united labor of fifty thousand fleshy men for a year.[2] But a still more wonderful conjuror fashioned for himself a mighty thing that was neither man nor beast, but which had brains of lead, intermixed with a black matter like pitch, and fingers that it employed with such incredible speed and dexterity that it would have had no trouble in writing out twenty thousand copies of the Koran in an hour; and this with so exquisite a precision, that in all the copies there should not be found one to vary from another by the breadth of the finest hair. This thing was of prodigious strength, so that it erected or overthrew the mightiest empires at a breath; but its powers were exercised equally for evil and for good."

"Ridiculous!" said the king.

"Among this nation of necromancers there was also one who had in his veins the blood of the salamanders; for he made no scruple of sitting down to smoke his chibouc in a red-hot oven until his dinner was thoroughly roasted upon its floor.[3] Another had the faculty of converting the common metals into gold. without even looking at them during the process.[4] Another had such a delicacy of touch that he made a wire so fine as to be invisible.[5] Another had such quickness of perception that he counted all the separate motions of an elastic body, while it was springing backward and forward at the rate of nine hundred millions of times in a second."[6]

"Absurd!" said the king.

"Another of these magicians, by means of a fluid that nobody ever yet saw, could make the corpses of his friends brandish their arms, kick out their legs, fight, or even get up and dance at his will.[7] Another had cultivated his voice to so great an extent that he could have made himself heard from one end of the world to the other.[8] Another had so long an arm that he could sit down in Damascus and indite a letter at Bagdad—or indeed at any distance whatsoever.[9] Another commanded the lightning to come down to him out of the heavens, and it came at his call; and served him for a plaything when it came. Another took two loud sounds and out of them made a silence. Another constructed a deep darkness out of two brilliant lights.[10] Another made ice in a red-hot furnace.[11] An-

[1] Maelzel's Automaton Chess-player.
[2] Babbage's Calculating Machine.
[3] *Chabert*, and since him, a hundred others.
[4] The Electrotype.
[5] *Wollaston* made of platinum for the field of view in a telescope a wire one eighteen-thousandth part of an inch in thickness. It could be seen only by means of the microscope.
[6] Newton demonstrated that the retina beneath the influence of the violet ray of the spectrum, vibrated 900,000,000 times in a second.
[7] The Voltaic pile.
[8] The Electro Telegraph Printing Apparatus.
[9] The Electro telegraph transmits intelligence instantaneously—at least so far as regards any distance upon the earth.
[10] Common experiments in natural philosophy.
[11] Place a platina crucible over a spirit lamp, and keep it a red heat; pour in some sulfuric acid, which, though the most volatile of bodies at a common temperature, will be found to become completely fixed in a hot crucible, and not a drop evaporates—being surrounded by an atmosphere of its own, it does not, in fact, touch the sides. A few drops of water are now introduced, when the acid, immediately coming in contact with the heated sides of the crucible flies off in sulfurous acid vapor, and so rapid is its progress, that the caloric of the water passes off with it, which falls a lump of ice to the bottom; by taking advantage of the moment before it is allowed to re-melt, it may be turned out a lump of ice from a red-hot vessel.

other directed the sun to paint his portrait, and the sun did.[1] Another took this luminary with the moon and the planets, and having first weighed them with scrupulous accuracy, probed into their depths and found out the solidity of the substance of which they are made. But the whole nation is, indeed, of so surprizing a necromantic ability, that not even their infants, nor their commonest cats and dogs, have any difficulty in seeing objects that do not exist at all, or that for twenty millions of years before the birth of the nation itself had been blotted out from the face of creation.''[2]

''Preposterous!'' said the king.

''The wives and daughters of these incomparably great and wise magi,'' continued Scheherazade, without being in any manner disturbed by these frequent and most ungentlemanly interruptions on the part of her husband—''the wives and daughters of these eminent conjurers are everything that is accomplished and refined; and would be everything that is interesting and beautiful, but for an unhappy fatality that besets them, and from which not even the miraculous powers of their husbands and fathers has, hitherto, been adequate to save. Some fatalities come in certain shapes, and some in others—but this of which I speak has come in the shape of a crochet.''

[1] The camera.

[2] Although light travels 186,000 miles in a second, the distance of 61 Cygni (the only star whose distance is ascertained) is so inconceivably great, that its rays would require more than ten years to reach the earth. For stars beyond this, 20—or even 1,000 years—would be a moderate estimate. Thus, if they had been annihilated 20, or 1,000 years ago, we might still see them today by the light which *started* from their surfaces 20 or 1,000 years in the past time.

''A what?'' said the king.

''A crochet,'' said Scheherazade. ''One of the evil genii, who are perpetually on the watch to inflict ill, has put it into the heads of these accomplished ladies that the thing which we describe as personal beauty consists altogether in the protuberance of the region which lies not very far below the small of the back. Perfection of loveliness, they say, is in the direct ratio of the extent of this lump. Having been long possessed of this idea, and bolsters being cheap in that country, the days have long gone by since it was possible to distinguish a woman from a dromedary——''

''Stop!'' said the king—''I can't stand that, and I won't. You have already given me a dreadful headache with your lies. The day, too, I perceive, is beginning to break. How long have we been married?—my conscience is getting to be troublesome again. And then that dromedary touch—do you take me for a fool? Upon the whole, you might as well get up and be throttled.''

These words, as I learn from the *Isitsöornot*, both grieved and astonished Scheherazade; but, as she knew the king to be a man of scrupulous integrity, and quite unlikely to forfeit his word, she submitted to her fate with a good grace. She derived, however, great consolation (during the tightening of the bowstring) from the reflection that much of the history remained still untold, and that the petulance of her brute of a husband had reaped for him a most righteous reward, in depriving him of many inconceivable adventures.

The Haunted Mansion

By MARIETTA HAWLEY

It stands alone on a haunted shore,
With curious words of a deathless lore
  On its massive gate empearled;
And its carefully-guarded, mystic key
Hideth its solemn mystery
  From the seeking eyes of the world.

And pictures out of each haunted room
Up through the ghostly shadows loom
  And gleam with a spectral light;
Pictures lit with a radiant glow,
And some that image such desolate wo
  That weeping you turn from the sight.

And oft do its stately walls repeat
Echoes of music wildly sweet,
  Swelling to gladness high;
With mournful ballads of ancient time,
And funeral hymns—and a nursery rime,
  Dying away in a sigh.

And oft in the silence of midnight air
You hear on its stately winding-stair
  The echoes of fairy feet;
Gentle footsteps, that lightly fall
Through the enchanted castle-hall
  And up in the golden street.

And still in a dark, forsaken tower,
Crowned with a withered cypress-flower,
  Is a bowed head turned away;
A face like carvèd marble white,
Sweet eyes drooping away from the light,
  Shunning the eye of day.

Mysteries strange its still walls keep;
Strange are the crowds that through it sweep,
  Walking by night and day;
But evermore will the castle-hall
Echo their footsteps' phantom fall,
  Till its walls shall crumble away.

NEXT MONTH

THE INFIDEL'S DAUGHTER

***By* E. HOFFMANN PRICE**

LANDON was greedy for the lips of the Infidel's Daughter, for the Hundred and One Strange Kisses that she bestowed upon those she loved, though he knew that the Hundred and First Kiss would consume him to ashes.

A TALE of strange magic, of a ziggurât built in the heart of Feringhistan, and the avatar of a beautiful maiden who danced by moonlight on the mound of Koyunjik. The signs of the zodiac rose to their predestined positions, and Ismeddin the old darvish strove to protect Landon from the wiles of Sarpanit, whom he had called from across the Border. A tale that breathes the exotic perfumes and weird witchery of the Orient. It will be published complete in the

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The Invading Horde

(Continued from page 608)

rushing hordes of the enemy monopters.

But I reckoned without the deep wisdom of the unknown enemy commander who led the mighty offensive. For I found that even as Lona and I could not get out of this great cone of light, neither could our aerial messages! We were as separated from the City of the East as if we had been in the very bowels of the earth. The corps in charge of the Invisible Frontier would never get our message, and before they could see what was happening it would be too late—and thus it turned out.

Even as the hordes, carrying a wall of dark cloud ahead of them, climbed into the skies, high above the ceiling of our monopters, I thought of another way. Lona and I were both perfect physical specimens. Perhaps we could endure the terrific coldness of the atmosphere above the ordinary ceiling of our monopters—and win our way to freedom by flying out at the *top* of the cone of light.

I shouted to Lona, who nodded wearily. We lifted straight upward with all the speed we could get from our monopters, nor did we even slacken pace until we had attained a height twenty thousand feet greater than the accepted "ceiling" of our monopters; but the cone of light stretched upward away from us still, seeming to reach the very stars—and at an elevation of eighty thousand feet there still seemed no way of winning free, and we could climb no higher. The air would not sustain the weight of our monopters, and from this grand and awful height we were compelled to remain and watch the slaughter of our people.

The clouds which went with the

(Continued on page 710)

I Was Afraid of This New Way to Learn Music

—*Until I Found It Was Easy As A-B-C*

Then I Gave My Husband the Surprise of His Life

"DON'T be silly, Mary. You're perfectly foolish to believe you can learn to play music by that method. You are silly to even think about it. Why, it claims to teach music in half the usual time and *without a teacher*. It's impossible."

That is how my husband felt when I showed him an ad telling about a new way to learn music. But how I *hated* to give up my new hope of learning to play the piano. When I heard others playing, I envied them so that it almost spoiled the pleasure of the music for me. For *they* could entertain their friends and family . . . *they* were musicians. I had to be satisfied with only hearing music.

I was so disappointed. I felt very bitter as I put away the magazine containing the advertisement. For a week I resisted the temptation to look at it again, but finally I couldn't keep from "peeking" at it. It fascinated me so much that finally, half-frightened, half-enthusiastic, I wrote to the U. S. School of Music—without letting my husband know.

Imagine my joy when the lessons started and I found that they were as easy as A, B, C. Why, a mere child could master them! My progress was wonderfully rapid and before I realized it, I was rendering selections which pupils who study with private teachers for years can't play. For thru this short-cut method, all the difficult, tiresome parts of music have been eliminated and the playing of melodies has been reduced to a simplicity which *anyone* can follow with ease.

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'Cello	Trombone

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Piano Accordion
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Finally I decided to play for Jack, and show him what a "crazy course" had taught me. So one night when he was sitting reading, I went casually over to the piano and started playing a lovely song. Words can't describe his astonishment. "Why . . . why" . . . he floundered. I simply smiled and went on playing. But soon Jack insisted that I tell him where I had learned . . . when . . . how? So I told of my secret.

One day not long after my husband came to me and said, "Mary, don't laugh, but I want to try learning to play the violin by that wonderful method. You certainly proved to me that it is a good way to learn music."

So only a few months later Jack and I were playing together. Now our musical evenings are a marvelous success. Every one compliments us, and we are flooded with invitations. Music has simply meant everything to us. It has given us Popularity! Fun! Happiness!

If you, too, like music—then write to the U. S. School of Music for a copy of the booklet "Music Lessons in Your Own Home," together with a Demonstration Lesson, explaining this wonderful new easy method.

Don't hesitate because you think you have no talent. Thousands of successful students never dreamed they possessed musical ability until it was revealed to them by a wonderful "Musical Ability Test." You, too, can learn to play your favorite instrument by *note* thru this short-cut method. Send the coupon. The Demonstration Lesson showing how they teach, will come AT ONCE. Address the U. S. School of Music, 4611 Brunswick Building, New York. *Instruments supplied when needed, cash or credit.*

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(Continued from page 708)

enemy monopters fell away from their myriad numbers when they had reached the airways above City of the East, and the monopters, in plain sight now, lifted skyward toward our hordes of defenseless people in and above Air Lane 50,000—and before the corps in charge of the Invisible Frontier could have seen what was happening, the enemy monopters were among our monopters, so that the rays from the Invisible Frontier would now have meant at the same time the wholesale slaughter of our own people. There was a chance that our people might win the fight in the air, I thought, and knew that the department heads of the Invisible Frontier must have thought likewise.

But it was hopeless. The enemy fell by thousands, yes; but where one enemy fell, fell a hundred of our people, free of their monopters, which had been burned away from around them by the mysterious rays used by the enemy, the occupants themselves burned to cinders even before they fell. Downward-drifting moths, their wings singed, their bodies lifeless and shapeless, soulless and lost! Black myriads, like feathers drifting earthward from a horizon-to-horizon flock of crows which is set upon by millions upon millions of fighting sparrows. The black clouds under which the enemy had launched its attack settled about the spires of the skyscrapers—and those spires vanished in a breath, disintegrated into invisible powder before our eyes, while our searchlights faded and died. Their operators, I knew instinctively, had died at their posts of duty, one by one.

From our place of imprisonment inside that cone, shut off from all our precious world, we witnessed the colossal destruction of the inhabitants of City of the East.

We watched until the last inhab-

itants of City of the East fell into the City to vanish in a breath as their falling cinder-bodies encountered the black clouds which hung about the skyscrapers. Then the enemy marshaled forces for the return to the submarines.

DARKNESS finally settled over all that remained of City of the East. Of all that vast myriad of white men and women, only Lona and I remained. But still the cone held us; and we were being drawn downward!

Looking up we knew the reason, for the cone was narrowing above us to become an ellipse, narrowing and retracting, drawing us in and down toward that pin-point of light whence came the light of the cone.

Swifter and swifter we dropped downward, forced by the narrowing, constricting cone, until we stood at last on the deck of that big submarine we had first seen.

Here men of color awaited us. They caught and removed us from our monopters, carried us into the heart of the metal monster, to stand before the grim commander of the invading Aliens—a great lump of a yellow man whose brow, smooth as an egg, was so ponderous as to be terrible, housing, plainly evident, such a brain as neither Lona nor I had ever before encountered.

"I am sorry," he said in our language; "but it was all inevitable! The fortunes of war, my friends, and you have lost! As you are the last representatives of your race, I wish to express to you the high respect in which I have held you, and my sorrow that there was no half-way ground upon which we could all meet. It was either you or we—and we have triumphed. As prisoners of war you are to be executed; but as a brave man and woman, who, I see, love each other, I leave you to choose the manner of your own departure

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from the world. You have all the time you desire in which to make your decision."

So, locked together in a room far below the deck of the big submarine, together for our last hours on earth as we shall be together in death, we have written, in collaboration, this story of City of the East. The commander of the Aliens has promised that it shall be published to the world, so that all living men, whatever their color, shall know of the wonder, the glory, the awesome grandeur of what was once the home of the white race—wonderful City of the East!

So it is finished, and tomorrow we die, Lona and I; but our death shall be glorious because of the promise of the commander of the Aliens. From the deck of the big submarine, which will emerge as part of the ritual of our passing, we will hurl ourselves heavenward in our monopters, which were not destroyed at our capture, to the very "ceiling".

There, when we have gone as high as we can, we will face each other. My right arm will support Lona while, with my left, I remove the headpiece of her monopter; with a flirt of her hand she will do the same for me. Then we shall begin that long, plummeting descent toward the Atlantic, which will be, if our strength holds in the ascent, eighty thousand feet below us.

Lieutenant Burks, author of the above story, has written for you an eery tale of the sea, called "Bells of Oceana"—a gooseflesh story of shuddery horror. It will appear in next month's issue of WEIRD TALES.

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Mail Coupon Today For Sample Machine

There is only one way for you to appreciate what a money-maker VE-PO-AD will be for you, and that is to send me the coupon and let me put a machine in your hands so you can see it, use it and prove that all my claims are true. Although VE-PO-AD sells regularly for $2.95, I will furnish you one at the special price of $1.65, with the understanding that this amount will be credited to you on your first order for five machines, or that if you can not see the sales possibilities of VE-PO-AD, you can return this sample machine to me within ten days and your money will be refunded in full. There are no strings attached to this offer. It's genuine and 100 per cent fair to you. If you are really interested in making money and in earning a substantial, steady income, investigate VE-PO-AD today. Mail the coupon now and let me put you on the way to big money.

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City _____ State _____

RELIABLE ADDING MACHINE CORPORATION

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The Eyrie

(Continued from page 582)

The September issue is the best yet. I read it late at night, and retired soon after. Now, for a woman, I have pretty steady nerves. But I live near the foot of Mount Hood, where the trees are very dense, and it is certainly lonesome. Well, that book nearly finished me for sleep. I left the light burning, and also took the hand-ax and scissors to bed with me."

Readers, what is your favorite story in this issue? *The Moon Menace,* by Edmond Hamilton, was your first choice in the September issue, closely pressed for this honor by *The Dead Wagon,* written by Greye La Spina, and *The White Lady of the Orphanage,* by Seabury Quinn.

MY FAVORITE STORIES IN THE NOVEMBER WEIRD TALES ARE:

Story	Remarks
(1)----------	----------
(2)----------	----------
(3)----------	----------

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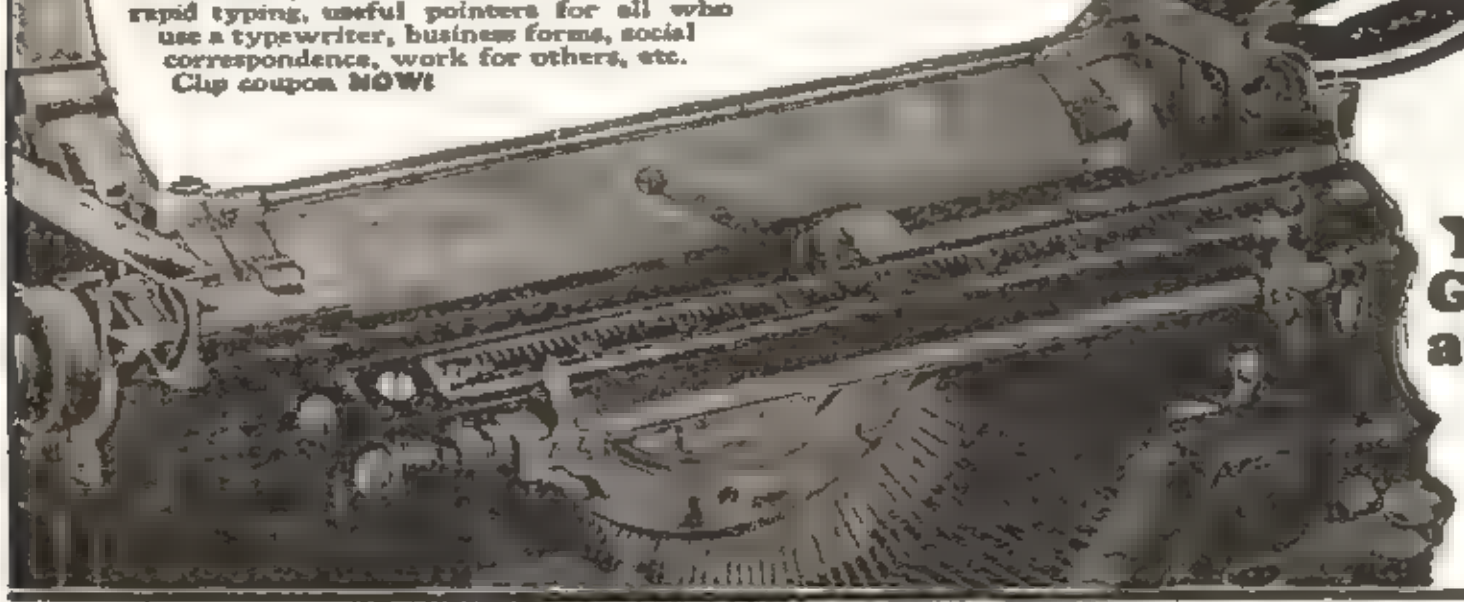

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A Certain Soldier

(Continued from page 624)

a restraining hand on my arm, and a voice: "Not that, friend Ebson! One does not wantonly destroy the relics of ancient art."

I turned and gazed full into the face of Lee Clayton. "But it is in there," I exclaimed, "the proof of the identity of 'a certain soldier'!"

He looked at me uncomprehendingly. A first gleam of early dawn stole across the city and found its way into the midst of the monuments and pillars that now give but a vague conception of the glory that was Rome when she was mistress of the world.

"The truth is in there," I asseverated, "and the twenty centuries have expired. Come, let us see!"

I seized the bar once again for a telling stroke, but instead dropped it helplessly at my feet as I became aware of the figure of a man observing us with penetrating gaze through the arch.

"Josephus!" I muttered hoarsely.

"That is Joseph Pollard," Lee whispered hurriedly in my ear. "It is he, my enemy, of whom I told you yesterday."

"Nevertheless, behold the 'certain soldier'," I cried triumphantly.

"You are both insane somnambulists!" shrilled the voice of Joseph Pollard, "and if either of you dares to deface this arch, I shall report you to the authorities."

There was a ring of triumph in his voice and a gleam of malice in his eye as he strode through the arch toward us. I caught the glitter of steel as he came through on our side of the monument. Then a distant shout, followed by a confused jargon and the sound of hurrying footsteps, dragged our attention to

(Continued on page 718)

The Man Who is Astounding America!

What is the mysterious power wielded by this man—a power he also shows others how to use? What is this new method which has started thousands of despairing persons on the road to health, happiness and prosperity?

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Those who were ill had been shown how to become well and strong by a method to which other mental science movements were as the first step in a mammoth, far-reaching stairway.

The worried and the nervous had been shown how to rise above their mental and nervous troubles in a single evening and how to attack and solve their problems with a keener mind unhampered by despair.

An Astounding New Power

But that wasn't all. Long before the lectures were over the reports began to come in showing how quickly his audiences had been taught to use a new, wonderful power that brought MATERIAL rewards.

"By your method of visualization I secured the funds to build my home," writes one of Dr. Bush's Chicago listeners. Mrs. Mary Roberts of Denver writes, "My salary was increased 40% in one week by following your psychological method—and my powers of salesmanship were DOUBLED." "TEN Thousand Dollars would not pay for the benefits I have received." James C. Smith of Somerville, Mass., writes him. Another says: "I was making no money, my health was bad and I was heavily in debt. Now I have a store of my own and am doing a good business. My family and myself enjoy the best of health." A man who learned of this power in Pittsburgh—he had never earned more than $25 per week—stepped out the first month and made over $1,000. Dr. Bush has thousands of letters like these. They are his proudest possessions.

Partial List of Contents

- Psycho-Analysis and the Subconscious
- How to Have Amazing Memory
- How to Destroy Fear—Man's Worst Enemy—The Unseen World
- What Is Love and How to Keep It
- How to Be Popular
- How to Overcome Failure and Adverse Environment
- How to Be Beautiful Through Mysterious Force
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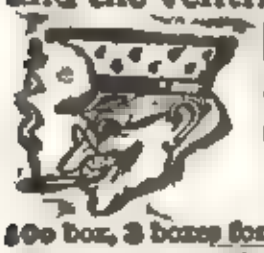

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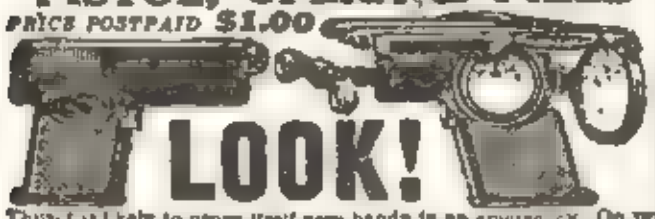

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(Continued from page 716)

the approach of two officers who ran up to Pollard and seized him.

"You are under arrest," said one of the policemen, "for entering a hotel guest's room and destroying his property."

CLAYTON and I left Pollard in the safe hands of the officers and returned to the hotel. We repaired at once to Lee's room. There, strewn on the table and floor, were minute fragments of what had once been a miniature likeness of the Arch of Titus. I commenced picking the pieces off the floor and Lee proceeded to clear up the fragments from the table, where they lay scattered across the books and papers which in his hurry he had left opened and thrown about.

A sudden exclamation brought me hurriedly to his side. He was staring with bulging eyes at a page of Latin wherein the words *miles certus* seemed to jump up out of the text to meet us, and immediately above the inscription, laid by the careful hand of Fate, was a fragment of the tiny arch; the breast and head of Josephus!"

"The twenty centuries are passed," I said, "and the prophecy is fulfilled. Josephus was right, though he did all within his power to prevent its accomplishment. He was unconsciously a tool in the hands of Fate."

After a silence of some moments I asked, "Why didn't Tacitus correct his version of 'a certain soldier'? Pliny intended to tell him the revelation of Josephus and that would have made it unnecessary for two thousand years to pass before its becoming known."

Lee Clayton smiled. "If you will look up Pliny the Elder in the encyclopedia, you will learn that he died at Pompeii in the famous eruption of Mt. Vesuvius in 79 A. D."

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